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POLICE CHIEF SAYS GOODBYE

Mike Fuller leaves force to take up senior job with CPS

By STEVE KNIGHT

THE county's most senior police officer has paid tribute to the colleagues he will be leaving behind as he announced his retirement from Kent Police.

Chief Constable Mike Fuller will lock 35 years of crime-fighting behind him when he takes up his new post as chief inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service in April.

Mike Fuller

The 50-year-old was confirmed in the role on Monday – more than a month after Attorney General Baroness Scotland put his name forward to the justice committee of MPs as her preferred candidate.

Mr Fuller, Britain's first black chief constable, told KOS Media he had great confidence in his Kent Police colleagues to continue to improve the force long after he has departed.

He said: "The staff have been great to work with and I've really enjoyed it. I've received some great emails of support from people too, which is always nice.

"There's a good atmosphere at Kent Police and I have a lot of confidence in the staff.

"We've faced some big challenges in a short space of time here – from the Securitas robbery and the Folkestone earthquake to the Channel Tunnel fire, the policing of the Tour de France and Operation Stack – and I think we've done a really good job.

"But my appointment comes to an end in September this year, so I've decided to move on from Kent. I feel very positive about being in the police but it was time to take up a different challenge.

"I wouldn't say I'd gone as far as I could because I could have joined another force or national body, but the job with the CPS came up and I'm seizing it with both hands."

Father-of-two Mr Fuller was appointed Kent chief constable on January 5, 2004.

During his time in charge the force has seen officer numbers increase by 263, police staff

CONTINUED ON PAGE SIX

Anger of rugby player blinded by eye-gouge

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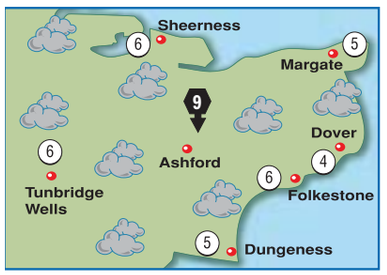
Kent today



TODAY: Cloudy and dull. There will be a chance of the odd light shower, but it will be dry for the most part. A gentle northerly wind. Max temp 3-6C (37-43F).
TONIGHT: Staying cloudy with a chance of the odd shower. A gentle or moderate northeasterly wind. Min temp 1-4C (34-36F).

Around Britain

		°C	°F			°C	°F
Aberdeen	cloudy	5	41	London	cloudy	6	43
Belfast	cloudy	6	43	Liverpool	cloudy	5	41
Birmingham	cloudy	6	43	Manchester	cloudy	5	41
B'mouth	cloudy	6	43	Newcastle	cloudy	5	41
Bristol	cloudy	5	41	Norwich	cloudy	4	39
Cardiff	cloudy	6	43	Oxford	cloudy	5	41
Cork	rain	7	45	Southsea	cloudy	6	43
Edinburgh	cloudy	5	41	S'hampton	cloudy	5	41
Glasgow	cloudy	6	43	Southport	cloudy	5	41
Isle of Man	cloudy	6	43	Swansea	cloudy	5	41
Leeds	cloudy	4	39	Torquay	cloudy	6	43

Sun & moon

Sunrise	7.25am	Sunset	4.55pm	Lighting up times:
Moonrise	3.02am	Moonset	10.31am	4.55pm to 7.23am

High Tides

	today				tomorrow			
		ht (m)		ht (m)		ht (m)		ht (m)
Dover	04.45	5.8	17.24	5.3	06.01	5.4	18.48	5.2
Margate	05.39	4.2	18.24	3.9	06.57	4.0	19.34	3.8
St Mary's	10.45	4.3	23.30	4.3	–	–	12.15	4.1

Week ahead

monday Cloudy. Dry. max 4C min 0C
tuesday Sleet in places. max 4C min -1C
wednesday Wintry showers. max 4C min -1C
thursday Cloudy. Dry. max 5C min -1C
friday Showers, wintry. max 6C min -1C
saturday Sunny spells. max 5C min -1C

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County's MPs take it on the chin over Commons expenses

Payback time as Sir Thomas gives his final verdict

By **MARIJKE COX**
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KENT MPs have been ordered to pay back a combined total of more than £30,000 after an inquiry into their expenses claims.

A report by Sir Thomas Legg reviewing House of Commons expenses revealed that 13 of the county's MPs had outstanding sums to pay.

This figure dropped to 12 following a successful appeal by North Thanet MP Roger Gale, who had faced repayments of £2,452.47 for parliamentary telephone bills and alleged payment of 13 months' rent.

He appealed to High Court judge Sir Paul Kennedy, who is dealing with any challenges.

Mr Gale said: "I had never refused to repay any sums properly due and, indeed, had indicated to Sir Paul that if he found any repayment to be warranted then I would accept his adjudication without question."

He is the only Kent MP to have been successful in his plight, after fellow Tory Michael Howard, who represents Folkestone and Hythe, failed in his challenge.

Mr Howard was ordered to pay back £7,039 after exceeding the £1,000 a year limit imposed retrospectively for cleaning and gardening after the expenses scandal.

Some MPs have complained these charges are "unfair", with a number getting their repayment orders scrapped.

Maidstone and Weald Tory MP Ann Widdecombe criticised the retrospective limits which resulted in her having to pay £230.

While agreeing to settle the payment, she stressed she had been cleared of any abuse of the system as there had been no limit on gardening expenditure when the claim was originally made.

Along with other MPs who feel they have been unfairly tainted through these retrospective charges, she called the review "lazy, incompetent and illogical".

Another of the county's MPs to become embroiled in this latest expenses saga is Paul Clark, Labour MP for Gillingham and Rainham. Sir Thomas' report said the transport minister must pay back more than £11,000 in second-home allowance.

This is the highest amount ordered for repayment from all the Kent MPs.

But Mr Clark said the figure was a "simple oversight" and that he had already appealed against the decision.

"In the run up to Christmas I failed to realise Sir Thomas was requesting new supporting information for the first time, about the 2008-09 claim for mortgage interest payments," he said.

"By the time I realised this, the deadline for submitting this supporting information had passed. As soon as I became aware of this omission I submitted all the relevant documentation to the review body and they received it last week, prior to the report going to the printers."

Labour MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey Derek Wyatt has also lodged an appeal for his repayment of £3,611.50.

More than 350 MPs have been ordered to pay back a total of about £1.1 million following Sir Thomas' inquiry.

PAUL CLARK MP: Largest amount

Full list of Kent MPs' repayments

MP	CONSTITUENCY	REPAYMENT
Julian Brazier (C)	**Canterbury**	**£248.49**
Paul Clark (L)	Gillingham and Rainham	£11,915.30
Michael Fallon (C)	**Sevenoaks**	**£2,000**
Damian Green (C)	Ashford	£2,102.14
Adam Holloway (C)	**Gravesham**	**£1,283.73**
Michael Howard (C)	Folkestone and Hythe	£7,039
Jacqui Lait (C)	**Beckenham**	**£1,041.59**
Bob Marshall-Andrews (L)	Medway	£231
Bob Neill (C)	**Bromley and Chislehurst**	**£283.50**
Gwyn Prosser (L)	Dover	£650
Ann Widdecombe (C)	**Maidstone and Weald**	**£230**
Derek Wyatt (L)	Sittingbourne and Sheppey	£3,611.50
TOTAL		**£30,636.25**

News and sport updated daily online www.kentnews.co.uk

Anger at pupils' wait for special needs info

PARENTS of children with special educational needs have attacked Kent County Council for delaying the school selection process.

Statements setting out which specialist school their 11-year-olds are to go to after leaving primary education in September have not been sent out, meaning they could miss the deadline for any appeals.

According to parents, meetings took place last summer with educational psychologists, KCC and schools co-ordinators to decide on placements for special educational needs (SEN) children.

Subsequent draft statements setting out which schools the children would attend were supposed to be with parents by December.

This meant they would have time to make representations in the event they were unhappy with the school choice and KCC could amend the statement before the authority's deadline of February 15. But the statements have yet to be sent out.

A parent from Gravesend, whose 11-year-old son suffers from Asperger's syndrome and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), is leading the fight for parents.

"Specialist units are being closed down and instead mainstream schools are providing support for SEN children," he said. "But some children need to be in specialist schools because of their condition and in some cases they can't cope with social integration with what you would call 'normal' children.

"In the draft statements, KCC say what school they think the child will go to, but in some cases this will be appealed against by parents.

Deadline

"Because of the delay in receiving the statement, however, we won't have time to make representations before the deadline.

"This means children could potentially miss out on the first term of school while the appeal process is still going through.

"It could even mean they will have to be set back a year."

Outlining his own son's case, he stressed that if placed in a mainstream school the 11-year-old's condition could worsen.

"My son has a history of self-harming," he said. "We have been told by CAMS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) that if he gets put in a mainstream school he could potentially start self-harming again due to stress.

"This means the school KCC sets out is very important and we need to know the decision so we can start thinking about appealing, if we need to.

"There are many families in similar situations who are very concerned about what's going to happen."

But a KCC official said the delays were for a reason.

"Kent would rather miss the deadline than send out a proposed statement that we know the parent would disagree with and which could cause distress.

"Our preferred approach would be to delay the process slightly and send out a proposed statement that is acceptable to the parent first time.

"This could still, in theory, be finalised by February 15. We are very mindful of parents' rights to appeal and any delay to this process must be minimal."

Gills film premiere

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
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A COMEDY film about a group of travelling Gillingham FC supporters hits cinema screens across the country next month.

The Shouting Men, which was shot mostly at locations throughout Kent and features a cameo by Gills chairman Paul Scally, will premiere in London just days before its nationwide release on March 5.

Producer Warren Llambias – son of Newcastle United managing director Derek – told KOS Media he was confident the film would be a success.

He said: "It's funny and I promise you it'll make people laugh a lot. It's proven popular with test audiences and I think it'll go down well, I really do.

"I don't imagine we'll be up for any Baftas, but I think it's a great little popcorn film that people will come out from saying they had a really good time. Comedy films don't receive cinema releases if they're not funny.

"To get to where we have with our first film, and on a budget of only £500,000, is a real achievement and we're delighted."

The Shouting Men, which also features cameos by England football legends John Barnes and Peter Beardsley, is about a group of Gillingham fans who travel to watch their team play Newcastle United in the FA Cup.

However, their trip north goes pear-shaped when they abandon a wheelchair-bound accomplice – or a closet football hooligan – who then complains about his treatment to the national press. Mr Llambias, who plays one of the Gills fans, said he wanted the film to encapsulate the types of supporters found at lower-league football grounds.

He said: "We needed to pick a club that has to fight. When you walk around Medway you see more people wearing Tottenham, Arsenal and Manchester United colours than you do Gillingham shirts.

"A small club like that has to fight to get its supporters, and that's something we really wanted to dip into. There's also a special type of camaraderie between the supporters of teams like Gillingham, and any lower league fan should be able to recognise that in the film.

EastEnders

"I wasn't a Gills supporter before we began shooting but I've become quite attached to the club over the months. I'm sure some supporters will remember a couple of years ago when we first came down here to pick their brains about what it was like to be a Gills fan."

Filming for the comedy, which also stars former Lovejoy actor Dudley Sutton and ex-EastEnder Craig Fairbrass, was completed at Newcastle's St James' Park stadium in late 2008. Other locations included Gillingham's Priestfield Stadium, the University of Greenwich at Chatham, and the Inn on the Lake hotel at Gravesend.

Mr Llambias admits a spanner was thrown into the works when Gillingham were promoted from League Two last season and Newcastle were relegated from the Premiership, thus making the David versus Goliath element less prominent.

He said: "It was really frustrating and we did talk about maybe going back and changing some of the dialogue.

"But we decided that Newcastle are still a huge club and will probably be back in the Premiership next season anyway."

GILLS ON FILM: The Shouting Men follows Gills fans on an FA Cup awayday to Newcastle

News and sport updated daily online
www.kentnews.co.uk

Pothole crews hit the roads

MORE than 10,000 potholes have been repaired on Kent's roads in just over a month.

Following recent icy weather that caused severe damage to the county's road network, about 60 crews have been working flat out to put things right.

About 6,000 potholes were filled in just one week in January. Kent County Council is still planning to spend an extra £1 million on repairs from March.

Cabinet member for highways Cllr Nick Chard said: "Since the snow cleared we have been getting to grips with the work. Repairing the damage will continue for as long as it takes and we are appealing for residents' help."

To report a fault, contact Kent Highway Services on 08458 247800; click online at www.kent.gov.uk/highways; or send an email to kenthighwayservices@kent.gov.uk.

Early retirement action poll axed

AN OVERWHELMING 83 per cent of people who voted in a KOS Media online poll believe firms should not be able to force staff to retire when they are aged 65.

Just 17 per cent of the 400 people who voted at kentnews.co.uk think companies should have this right.

• You can vote on whether Chief Constable Mike Fuller has been good for the county at kentnews.co.uk.

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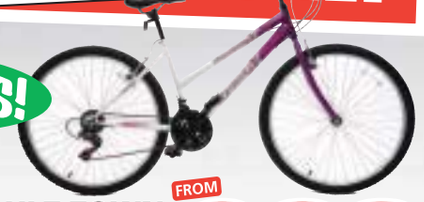

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Students miss out as universities face cuts

MASSIVE spending cuts in university funding could mean hundreds of would-be students missing out on places at Kent's universities.

And hopefuls trying to get into the University of Kent or Canterbury Christ Church could face intense competition as they vie for limited spaces caused by government capping and the funding shortfall.

PhD students could also be turned away as research budgets are slashed.

Fears from university officials follow the announcement by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) – which distributes government money to universities – about major cuts.

'Spur'

It revealed that funding would be £449 million less than expected for 2010-11 and more than £500m less than last year.

By 2013, university budgets will have been slashed by £915m.

Universities secretary Lord Mandelson said the move would act as a "spur" for institutions to find other sources of funding.

The announcement by the HEFC did not include a breakdown of figures for each university, but each establishment is awaiting news of its own losses.

A spokesperson at the University of Kent said: "The official letter from the funding council hasn't come through, but we're expecting cuts – I think everybody is.

By **MARIJKE COX**
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"Each university is sent information setting out its own changes of funding."

Areas at risk of being affected by the cuts include teaching, where around £215m is being slashed, and postgraduate courses, which are threatened with a £24m cut.

Research councils, which fund a quarter of PhD research, are also cutting back.

Older universities that undertake less research could be forced to stop postgraduate research altogether.

Instead, postgraduates will be sent to centres of high specialism or select universities, specifically chosen to provide facilities for doctoral research.

In 2007-08, the University of Kent saw 85 students complete doctorates – a low figure in comparison to the University of Cambridge which had 950, and the University of Manchester with 830.

But Professor Diane Houston, Dean of the Graduate School at Kent, said the institution enjoyed considerable success in the last Research Assessment Exercise, which enables funding bodies to decide on grants.

She said: "All 18 schools were recognised as conducting research of international and world-class standing.

"This year we are advertising a £3.6m postgraduate scholarship fund, which includes funding from the UK research councils.

"We also have university-funded research scholarships and teaching assistantships as well as sport and music scholarships."

She added that Kent now has a graduate school to provide a supportive and rewarding academic community for study and research.

"Kent has been consistently successful in gaining Research Council recognition and accreditation for its postgraduate research training," she said.

But critics of the funding announcements have stressed the need for more certainty in the system.

Pressure

Professor Steve Smith, president of Universities UK, a higher education action group, said: "The continued uncertainty about the nature and scale of the cuts puts a real additional pressure on universities' ability to plan effectively.

"In the long run, this has the potential to threaten universities' ability to offer the high-quality experience our students deserve and expect."

He also criticised regulations that could see £10m charged to universities that over-recruited last year.

And he stressed that a cap on the number of places and the funding cuts means many could miss out.

"We are going to see even more pressure on places and the possibility of many well-qualified students missing out," he added.

2012 metro plan

A NEW Metro-style commuter train running from Calais to Kent could be in place by the start of the 2012 Olympics, according to French civic leaders.

Pas-de-Calais councillor Dominique Dupilet said the trains could run on the high-speed rail link, and stop in the French town before travelling on to Kent stations.

A spokesman at Kent County Council said proposals were outlined in the authority's Integrated Transport Strategy which is part of the Unlocking Kent's Potential programme.

"It's part of the transport strategy for the next 20 years," he said.

He added that it was one of a number of plans outlined for the county.

Down's target met at hospitals

HOSPITALS across Kent and Medway are meeting national standards for Down's syndrome screening programmes.

Of the 10 maternity units assessed, those in Buckland Hospital, Dover; Kent and Canterbury; the QEQM, Margate; and the William Harvey Hospital, Ashford, use the most effective screening process, called the combined test.

This brings together information from an ultrasound scan, blood tests and measurements of the spinal chord at the back of the baby's neck, detecting between 75-90 per cent of cases of the disability.

By April, all maternity units across the UK must have a detection rate of 75 per cent.

The Medway Maritime Hospital, which uses just the ultrasound method, has reached national standards already, but health chiefs are planning on bringing in additional blood tests as part of the screening process.

Widdecombe: God's law is still relevant

DEVOUT Roman Catholic Ann Widdecombe believes modern society could learn a thing or two from the rules of her faith.

The claim from the Maidstone and Weald Tory MP follows her emotional investigation into Ten Commandments for Channel 4's new documentary The Bible: A History.

The aim of the seven-part series is to look at the role of the Bible and if its message is still relevant in today's world.

When asked if society already lived by the Commandments, Miss Widdecombe replied: "What about 'thou shall not covet' and bankers' bonuses? What about 'thou shalt not commit adultery' and the complete breakdown of marriage? 'Honour thy father and thy mother' and nowadays we stick granny in the nearest residential home.

"The Ten Commandments have been massively important is shaping British society and law – 'thou shalt not steal', 'thou shalt not kill', 'thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour' – these things are very, very central to our law but to our society as well.

"I think if we all lived by the Ten Commandments, we'd be a much better, more considerate, more orderly society"

The outspoken Conservative MP, who will retire at the next General Election, was raised in the Church of England and became a Roman Catholic in 1993.

Faith plays a fundamental role in her life, which made her trip to the Mount Sinai for the show a "wonderful experience".

According to the Bible, Mount Sinai is where God handed the Commandments to Moses.

Viewers will also see Ms Widdecombe's confront atheists, actor Stephen Fry and author Christopher Hitchens, in what the MP described as more of an unimpressive "rant" than a debate about whether the Catholic

BIBLE CLASS: Tory MP Ann Widdecombe

Church is a force for good in the world.

Ms Widdecombe said: "Stephen Fry ranted and I think at heart he is not convinced of his own argument.

"Christopher Hitchens is a different cup of tea all together. He has elevated objections to the Ten Commandments to a militant campaign, and on that basis there was never going to be any meeting of minds. And there wasn't."

The Maidstone MP previously presented Channel 4's acclaimed series Christianity: A History, in 2008 in which she explored religious reformation.

• ***A Bible: A History is on C4 at 7pm tonight.***

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Kingsnorth protest: 'The police could have done better'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

employees by 485, and community support officers by 329.

Mr Fuller also oversaw the introduction last September of neighbourhood task teams, one of the legacies he was most proud of.

He said: "The support from Kent people has been excellent too. I regularly go out to visit communities and that's something I set out to do from my first week.

"I've tried to be accountable to the public. It's all about seeing things, meeting people and finding out their experiences first hand."

Mr Fuller joined the Metropolitan Police as a cadet in 1975 and worked his way up to detective chief inspector.

As a detective superintendent in the Home Office he specialised in giving advice and carrying out inspections of other forces in relation to crime and counter-terrorism. In 1998 he helped set up the Racial and Violent Crime Task Force in response to criticism of the Met arising from the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. His last major position before joining Kent Police came in 2002 when he became deputy assistant commissioner (director of intelligence).

Yet despite all his successes Mr Fuller has also received his share of criticism, most notably for how the Kingsnorth Climate Camp protests of summer 2008 were handled.

Mr Fuller said: "I admitted only this week on TV that I accepted there were aspects of the operation that could have been done better.

"No operation is perfect, you have to be willing to learn and improve."

Before winning the job with the CPS, it is believed Mr Fuller failed in attempts to become commissioner and an assistant commissioner of the Met. It is also understood he had applied for the top job at the British Transport Police.

Mr Fuller holds post-graduate diplomas in law, marketing and criminology and is a non-practicing barrister, having been called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in July, 2007.

He will replace CPS Chief Inspector Stephen Wooler, whose contract expires at the end of March.

Mike Fuller: My achievements

- Number of police officers has increased by 263, police staff employees by 485 and PCSOs by 329.
- Rise in satisfaction with police from the victims of crime from 81.4 per cent when first recorded in March, 2005, to 86.6 per cent today.
- Reduction in overall crime by 22.9 per cent from 102,819 crimes reported per year to 79,276.
- Rise in detection rate from 25.4 per cent to 34.8 per cent.
- The conviction of six people and the recovery, so far, of more than £21m from the Securitas robbery at Tonbridge.
- The introduction of both neighbourhood task teams and neighbourhood policing teams to every policing district in Kent.
- The use of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition system across Kent that has enabled officers to target criminals.
- Preserving Kent Police's identity while achieving significant financial savings by collaborating with Essex Police.
- Kent is one of only eight forces graded good by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2009 for the Policing Pledge.

Search is on for our next chief constable

POSSIBLE: Deputy Chief Constable Adrian Leppard

By STEVE KNIGHT

KENT Police Authority may seek an exemption to rules that state Deputy Chief Constable Adrian Leppard cannot step into the top job.

Mr Leppard will fill in for Mike Fuller on a temporary basis until a permanent replacement is appointed in the summer, but cannot be promoted because he has already served as both a deputy and assistant chief constable in the same force.

Last month he missed out on landing the top job at Norfolk Constabulary.

Kent Police Authority chief executive Mark Gilmartin said: "There's a requirement that says you cannot serve as all three chief officer ranks in the same force because it is felt there is a benefit to having experience elsewhere.

"This can be waived in extreme circumstances so we may well seek to secure an exemption; not to shove Adrian into the job but just in case he wants to apply. Undoubtedly he would make an outstanding chief constable, here or elsewhere."

The authority is already advertising for the new post, which comes with a salary of £147,456.

Mr Gilmartin said he hoped to be in a position to assess the shortlist by the middle of May.

Should Mr Leppard apply for the job, the authority will apply to the senior appointments panel and a decision made next month.

Mr Fuller said: "I've worked very closely with Adrian. He's a very able, competent and energetic deputy and I have every confidence in him."

Ian Pointon, chairman of the officers' union the Kent Police Federation, declined to comment on Mr Fuller's performance as chief constable.

Justice committee welcomes new inspector

THE MPs asked to endorse Mike Fuller as CPS chief inspector admitted they were unsure if the post was suitable for a former police officer.

Justice committee members initially felt the two organisations might be too closely linked for one to be scrutinised by the other, but were eventually convinced Mr Fuller was the man for the job.

Chairman Sir Alan Beith said: "We are pleased to endorse Mr Fuller. We agree with his preliminary view of the character and priorities of his role and of the Inspectorate, and welcome his grasp of the need for independence, specialist expertise where necessary and for an understanding of the criminal justice system as a whole."

As part of his new role, Mr Fuller will manage about 45 permanent staff, as well as an annual budget of about £3.8 million.

Mark Gilmartin – chief executive of the Kent Police Authority who appointed Mr Fuller – has paid tribute to his outgoing chief constable.

He said: "I'd like to wish Mike the best of luck in his new role and thank him on behalf of the authority for all his achievements.

"He has been extremely successful here and I'm sure he'll continue to be so in the future.

"I think the roll-out of neighbourhood policing was one of Mike's biggest achievements here, and he worked closely with the authority to make that happen."

Authority chairman Ann Barnes added: "Since Mr Fuller's appointment here he has made a significant difference in raising the profile of the force.

"I would like to congratulate Mr Fuller and wish him every success in the future. He will be missed but we have a strong senior team who will take us forward in 2010."

To see this clip search 'Fuller' @ yourkenttv.co.uk

Mike Fuller discusses his departure

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Hand in hand with sexual diversity show

PHOTOS of gay couples holding hands are being displayed as part of a month-long celebration of Kent's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Inspired by the national Day in Hand campaign, the exhibition at County Hall in Maidstone will feature shots submitted for the Hand in Hand in Kent competition.

Other events for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month include talks by gay authors, a same-sex marriage information evening and the screening of a film called the Homophobia Project.

The hand-holding exhibition, which began on Tuesday and will continue until February 24, will also feature information on services, including civil partnerships and adoption.

Hate crimes

Events will also include a screening of the 2007 film Ruby Blue – starring Bob Hoskins – about a man who forms a friendship with a little girl but is then accused of being a paedophile when she goes missing.

The movie will be shown at the County Hall lecture theatre, at 7pm, on February 19. See www.kent.gov.uk for more information.

Kent Police, ranked the UK's ninth most gay-friendly employer, is also holding events.

Last year the force came under fire for a gay essay contest for schoolchildren, but there is no such controversy this time around.

On Wednesday, police will join KCC in hosting a seminar in Medway for staff support groups, while on February 26 a public meeting will discuss dealing with gay hate crimes.

Visit www.kent.police.uk for details. Call 0800 328 9162 to report a gay hate crime.

Going back to our roots

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

ORGANISERS of the Kent County Show say they are putting the focus back on farming after criticism of recent events.

Total attendance for last year's three-day programme was about 80,000, but it is hoped that figure can be boosted by at least 10,000 by reaching out to the agricultural community.

A new website with links to social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube also aims to attract a younger crowd to the show.

Kent County Agricultural Society (KCAS) chairman George Jessel said his team had taken on board comments from attendees, exhibitors, farmers and staff.

He said: "In the past there has been the odd criticism about us being too focused on aspects like selling cars and not enough on agriculture, but that's going to change.

"This year there will be lots of exciting new stands and rings, and the show will definitely be more agriculturally and horticulturally-based.

"It's not going to be the old, mundane, run-of-the-mill show that perhaps we've been putting on in recent years. We're going to attack 2010 with real vigour and attract people back."

First held in 1923, the Kent County Show is an annual event celebrating the rural life of the county. For the last 45 years it has been held at the County Showground at Detling, near Maidstone.

COUNTRY WAYS: The emphasis will shift back to farming for the Kent County Show

Typical attractions include birds of prey displays, agricultural demonstrations, livestock competitions and a young farmers area.

KCAS general manager David Goff said this year there will also be a focus on healthy eating and local produce, and about 20 outside ambassadors will help spread word of the show.

A promotional event will also be held in Maidstone town centre and 250 Arriva buses will carry posters on a 'Let the Show Begin' theme. A deal has also been struck with P&O Ferries.

Mr Goff added: "The emphasis is on re-engaging not only with the farming community but also the public. We've seen the loss of four or five agricultural shows around the country in the last year and we're not going to go the same way.

"We want to be around for at least the next 30 to 40 years and are looking forward to a very positive and successful future."

KCAS employed the services of Cortexx Creative to design the new website for this year's show, which among other features includes a blog and live countdown to the big event.

Mr Jessel said he hoped that by advertising on social networking websites, younger people would be attracted to the agriculture.

He said: "We want to put over that farming is not just for the old grey-haired brigade. It's vital that we take the lead and show that agriculture is for young people and there's a good career for them.

"There's a career structure and we are as modern as the IT world is. We're not living in the past."

The Kent County Show takes place over three days from Friday to Sunday, July 16-18. Pre-booked tickets cost £15 for adults, £5 for children and £11 for pensioners. A family ticket for £43 can be purchased on the gate only. Visit www.kentshowground.co.uk for more information.

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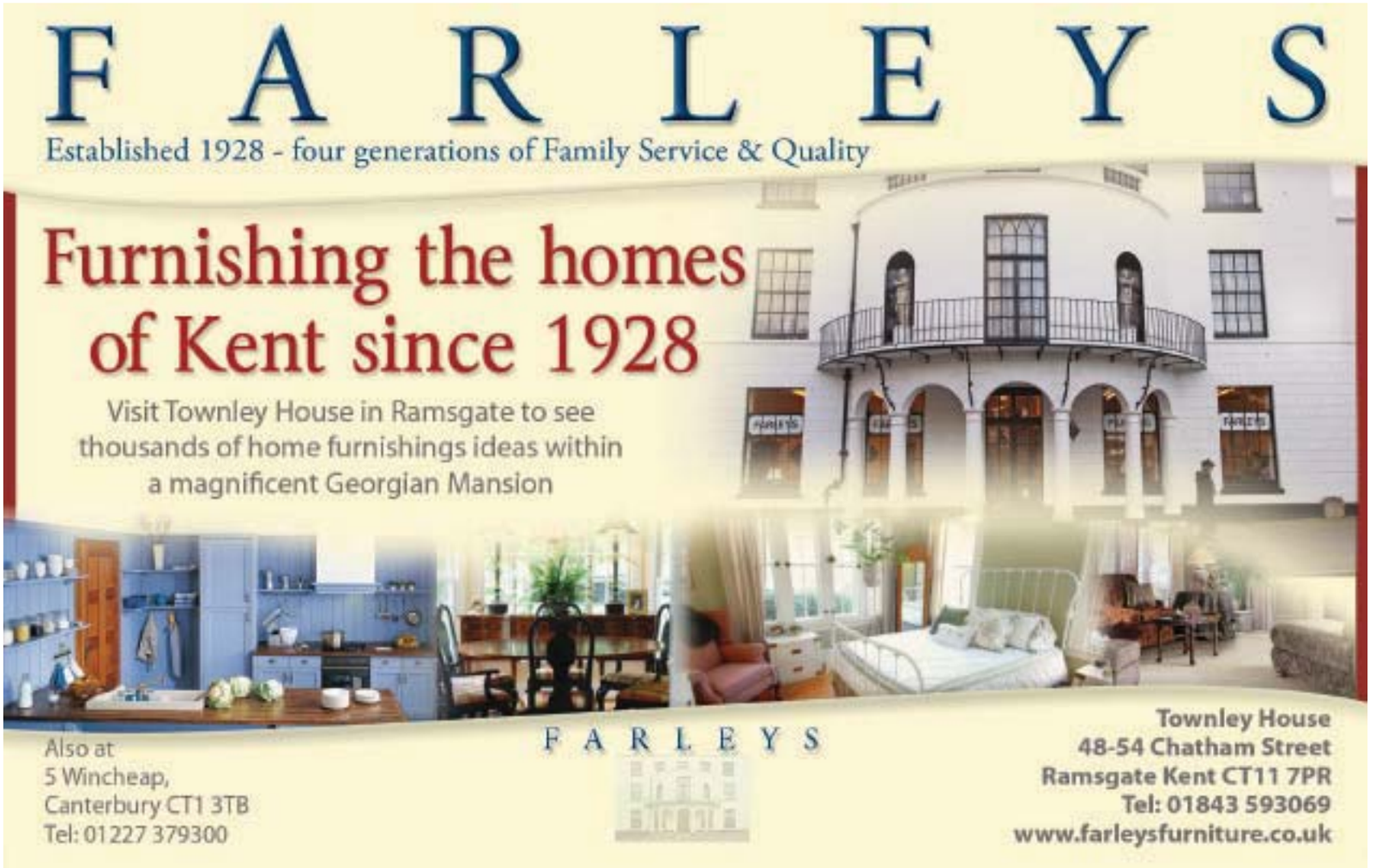

Imagine a serious car accident and all the injuries inflicted, then experience it

Our hero doctor returns

A HOSPITAL in the middle of the Afghan desert under constant threat from the Taliban is a far cry from the usual day-to-day practice of a GP.

But Colonel Peter Gilbert, from the Thorndike surgery in Rochester, has just returned from heading up a team of 200 medical staff at the main hospital in Camp Bastion, saving the lives of injured soldiers on the frontline.

The 51-year-old, who is the commanding officer for the Territorial Army's 256 City of London field hospital, spoke to KOS Media about his inspiring team and the shocking injuries seen on a daily basis.

"If you imagine in the UK a very serious car accident and the kind of injuries inflicted, well the average person working for the NHS will see this perhaps once a year," he said.

Serious injury

"In Camp Bastion, however, these kinds of injuries, caused by bombs and improvised explosive devices, are all centred in one place so you have to get used to seeing it.

"All the people in the Helmand Province – soldiers from Britain, America, Denmark as well as Afghan security – are brought to Camp Bastion for treatment.

"Some of the injuries were very unpleasant to see – it could be quite a shock, but the training we had before we went was to make sure everyone was ready to cope with it."

By MARIJKE COX
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

Col Gilbert, who was away for three-and-a-half months, said his team quickly became skilful at dealing with atrocious injuries, such as loss of limbs.

The father-of-two has also praised the cutting edge, modern facilities they had at the field hospital.

"As soon as a casualty was brought in, a team would stabilise them, get them into the operating theatre and try and stop as much of the bleeding as possible," he said.

"When they reached the point where the casualty was stable they would be moved to the intensive care unit.

"In some cases the British RAF would pick the casualty up in an aircraft, which is like a flying intensive care unit, and they would be flown to Birmingham where they would receive more treatment."

Col Gilbert said some soldiers would wake up in the UK with their last memories being of them in Afghanistan.

"We would keep a diary with notes from the nurses about their treatment and we would also get their comrades to write messages so they could fill in the time they lost," he added.

Col Gilbert, who has been in the military for 30 years, including 12 years in the regular Army, said there were also times when they would have to treat the enemy.

"It was our professional duty to help them,"

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on a daily basis – an Army GP shares his Afghan experiences

from the frontline

SAVING LIVES: Col Peter Gilbert has recently returned from a tour of duty in the field hospital at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan

he said. "The detainee would be kept at one end of the ward behind screens. We would brief the other patients and they understood we had to do our jobs."

He admitted this could be hard for some, particularly as there were medical staff flying out to dangerous conditions to pick up casualties.

"I'm sure that the Taliban would have liked nothing more than to shoot down our Medical Emergency Response Team," he said.

"I had an anaesthetist and paramedic flying out to what we called 'hot areas' and the Chinook had bullet holes where they had been targeted."

Some of the tragic cases the hospital dealt with included the deaths of five policemen who were shot and killed by a rogue Afghan policeman in November.

Inspiring

Col Gilbert said: "Five were tragically killed and quite a lot of others were injured so my team had to make sure they lived.

"I've been praised for saving these lives, but it was my team – they were inspiring."

Another tragic case that Col Gilbert said affected him the most was the death of bomb disposal expert Captain Dan Read.

The 31-year-old suffered horrific injuries when molten shrapnel ripped into his shoulder in October, but after undergoing treatment and being flown home, he insisted on returning to lead his men.

Just weeks after his return he was killed diffusing a roadside bomb set up by the Taliban.

Col Gilbert said: "He was in the Camp Bastion hospital for a few days and the nurses got to know him quite well. They were devastated when they heard what had happened."

Col Gilbert is now back on English soil and will return to his Rochester surgery next month.

He added: "The Americans that were part of the team are doing a six-month tour so they are still in Afghanistan.

"It was strange leaving them behind. The Scottish TA has taken over our job now, but I still feel like part of me is out there."

Villagers' plea to PM on polytunnels

RESIDENTS OF Ickham near Canterbury have asked Gordon Brown to intervene in a row over the spread of fruit-growing polytunnels across the countryside.

A petition on the No 10 website calls on the PM to instruct planning authorities to prevent polytunnel development near to Conservation Areas or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The campaigners say the countryside around their medieval village is increasingly being lost to polytunnels.

James Dixey, chairman of Ickham Residents Action Committee said: "The law on polytunnels is in a mess and we are asking central Government to clarify the situation for planners. We understand the need for a viable and successful rural economy, but nearly 200 villagers have come together to say enough is enough and to ask the council to take action."

'We need to avoid counter-terrorism inertia' insists MP

A KENT MP has defended a counter-terrorism report described as "inadequate" and "wholly inaccurate" by Home Secretary Alan Johnson, ***writes Steve Knight***.

The study by the home affairs committee suggested the Government was unwilling to make the reforms necessary to keep up with the ever-changing terrorist threat, and accused the Home Office of "institutional inertia".

Mr Johnson hit out at the report immediately following its publication this week, but committee member Gwyn Prosser – the Labour MP for Dover and Deal – said he stood by the findings.

He said: "The report is looked upon as a criticism of some Home Office practices, but we are an all-party committee and we tell it like it is.

"There's no doubt there is already quite a complex anti-terrorism structure in place, and it's just human nature for the people involved to defend it. But we are looking at it with fresh eyes and in our view there are things that could be done better.

"Look at the terrorists' methods – they're adapting all the time and we need to be ahead of the game. We need to avoid inertia and be proactive."

The report by the committee specifically criticises the time it took the police and MI5 to set up regional counter-terrorism units, with chairman Keith Vaz claiming suggestions for reforms to the counter-terrorism structure were continually rebuffed.

In response Mr Johnson said the Government fully understands the threat faced by international terrorism and has "extremely effective" systems and processes in place to deal with it.

However, Mr Prosser told KOS Media he thought one of the biggest problems in dealing with terrorists was that UK law currently states intercepted telephone calls cannot be used as evidence in court.

He said: "Officers draw heavily on intercepted calls to detect and disrupt terrorist activity, but at the moment they can't use that evidence in a court of law.

"We went to Washington to talk to counter-terrorism officers there and they couldn't understand how we could function without that evidence, because they rely on it hugely.

"The problem is, if a prosecutor uses part of a tape then the defence team can access all of the tape, and that brings up all manner of security issues. Our US counterparts understand that but have safeguards in place."

Mr Prosser said the Home Office is expected to respond to the report within the next few months, adding: "Hopefully they'll take on board our recommendations and there might be some movement there."

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Free care bill would cost taxpayer £22m

By **MARIJKE COX**
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

TAXPAYERS could end up footing a £22 million bill if Government plans to introduce unlimited free care for the elderly get the go ahead.

Social service officials at Kent County Council slammed the proposals, arguing they are "simply not affordable".

Concerns were raised after ministers announced they were hoping to bring in new guidelines with the Personal Care at Home Bill, to try and eliminate time limits in respect of elderly and disability care.

Currently, local authorities are able to provide certain community care schemes free of charge for up to six weeks.

Complex guidelines

But Government intends to remove this time limit for those with greatest need, despite problems with cost.

National guidance for free personal care is only in draft form, but highlights some of the complex guidelines that need to be met for a person to be entitled to the service.

To get the promised free personal care the individual must have the "highest levels of need" and require day-to-day assistance with eating and drinking, personal toilet care, managing immobility, management of medication and ensuring personal safety.

In addition, the risk to the individual if these needs are not met must be critical, for example, their lives are threatened or significant health problems will develop.

Research carried out by KCC's adult social services team found the new policy could cost the authority between £9m and £22m, with only a £5m government grant for support.

Cllr Graham Gibbens, cabinet member for Kent adult social services at KCC, said the scheme could only be paid for through cuts to NHS cuts and higher council taxes.

"In an ideal world, we would wish to give free personal care at home to as many elderly people as possible," he said. "However, it is simply not affordable, particularly since we are in the throes of a debt crisis.

"Having given careful consideration to the details in the consultation document and accompanying impact assessment, we have grave misgivings and reached the conclusion the proposals have not been sufficiently costed and assessed."

The Department of Health admitted in an impact assessment to uncertainties within the costs.

Cllr Gibbens said: "In my opinion, this has been pushed through with limited debate in the House of Commons."

If plans are given the go ahead, hundreds more people would qualify for free care in their homes by carers.

Cllr Gibbens added: "Other financial risks, which cannot be assessed but which could further increase costs, are people believing they should be eligible for this support when they are not, therefore refusing to pay for their support," he said.

The Personal Care at Home Bill was read at the House of Lords on Monday after being passed through the House of Commons last month.

County Hall chief denies talking about benefit cuts with top Tory

KENT County Council leader Paul Carter has distanced himself from plans to reduce benefit payments to people who live in towns with more jobs.

Newspaper reports suggested a Conservative government would consider making such a change, and KCC was one of the authorities involved in talks with shadow chief secretary Philip Hammond.

While admitting he met Mr Hammond for lunch last month, Cllr Carter told KOS Media he had "never in his life" spoken about reducing benefits.

He said they instead discussed Cllr Carter's paper Bold Steps for Radical Reform, which includes a wide range of money-saving proposals to devolve some government powers to local authorities.

Cllr Carter added: "I think Philip Hammond misinterpreted what is enshrined in my paper. He seems to be suggesting local government should change the benefits entitlement, whereas I just think benefit support could be better utilised.

"What we are saying is if you spend £2.2 billion on welfare dependency in Kent – about £25,000 per family – then how can you spend that money in a more creative way to get people who are out of work back into employment?"

Mr Hammond revealed at a conference last week that the Conservative Treasury team was considering handing responsibility to local councils for the setting and distributing of benefits.

He said: "There are key issues we will have to face in delivering this agenda.

"Can we take the public with us in this agenda? Can we persuade people living in your area, for example, they would rather see the management of workless benefits in the hands of a local authority than in the hands of a national government setting standards nationally?"

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Cannabis arrests

THREE people were arrested after police found 200 cannabis plants at a home.

Officers swooped on Wednesday, February 3, after a call from a member of the public reporting suspicious noises at an address at The Moor, Hawkhurst.

When officers went to the house they discovered approximately 200 cannabis plants being grown hydroponically.

A vehicle in the area was stopped by officers who arrested two men and a woman in connection with the plants being grown at the house.

The three were later bailed while inquiries continue.

Licence to thrill

A TUTOR at Kent Music will have the world premiere of his latest work, the James Bond Piano Concerto, performed at the Cadogan Hall, London on February 20.

Simon Proctor teaches harmony and composition at Kent Music Academy, the Saturday school for gifted and talented youngsters.

The piece is a medley of all the James Bond themes, and there has been interest in the concerto from around the world. A recording of the music will be made this summer in the USA.

Tickets can be purchased by calling 020 7730 4500 or visiting the Cadogan Hall website at www.cadoganhall.com and cost £18.

Boy, 5, run over

A FIVE-year-old boy suffered head injuries when he was run over.

The accident involving a black Ford Fusion car happened just before 3.25pm on Wednesday, February 3, in Powder Mill Lane, Tunbridge Wells.

The boy was taken to the Kent and Sussex Hospital and later transferred to a hospital in London. His condition was described as stable but critical.

Grant to provide dedicated support for young rape victims

Specialist advisor to help sexually abused children

A CHARITY supporting Kent's victims of rape and sexual violence has secured funding for Britain's first-ever children's independent advisor, ***writes Marijke Cox***.

The new position means young people who have suffered abuse at the hands of rapists and paedophiles can access specialist, confidential support, solely for youngsters.

Gravesend-based Family Matters was able to make the provision thanks to a grant of £64,000 from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

Malcolm Gilbert, operations director at the charity, said the new Young Person's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (YP-ISVA) is vital.

He said. "Of the 200 rape victims we see, a quarter are aged 12 to 16.

"By offering this help we are filling a gap which has never been done before for children."

Mr Gilbert added that as well as being awarded the grant, the partnership between Family Matters, the Crown Prosecution Service and Kent Police through the Kent Criminal Justice Board has made real changes to victim support.

The organisations are also working with the UK Border Agency to help deal with young girls who have been trafficked for the sex trade.

Convictions

Rebecca Masey, who has taken on the YP-ISVA position, will offer tailored support to children and young people who have suffered rape or sexual abuse and act as a gateway to the charity's therapy service.

Risk assessments will take place to ensure further victimisation is stopped.

The focus will be on hard-to-reach groups and youngsters less likely to come forward for help. Close family members of victims will also receive support.

Deputy Chief Constable Adrian Leppard, who chairs the Kent Criminal Justice Board, said he is sure the specialist service will also help secure convictions.

"Through this role, vulnerable and emotionally-scarred children will get more of the help and support they need and deserve," he said.

One person who knows only too well the need for services like Family Matters is 24-year-old Sarah, (not her real name).

Last August she was raped by two men after her drink was spiked. Speaking about her ordeal to KOS Media, she said she would not have been able to cope had it not been for the Adults' Independent Sexual Violence Advisor.

"It's important children are helped too," she said. "I wouldn't have been able to get through this without the counselling.

"I would just say to anybody, don't hide it. Come forward and get help."

For more information go to www.familymattersuk.org.

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To be in with a chance of winning a pair of tickets to the Saturday, March 20, show at London's O2 Arena, answer this question:

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Artefacts saved as fire museum made homeless

By **CHRIS MURPHY**

THE Kent fire service museum urgently needs a new home.

Fire chiefs have reluctantly been forced to move it from their Maidstone headquarters, and are now hunting for a new location to house the collection.

Fire service historian Roger Mardon, from Canterbury, said he was sad about the closure, but delighted his campaign to keep the collection together has been successful.

He said: "In my view, the museum should preferably be maintained at service headquarters but, if that were not to be, it is important to preserve the collection intact.

"There was unanimous support [at the Kent Fire and Rescue Authority's planning and performance committee] for the principle of keeping the collection together.

"A project team, including representatives of the interested parties, is to be established to develop plans for a virtual [online] museum and for rehousing the artefacts.

"Committee chairman Keith Ferrin made it clear it was not the intention to close the existing museum straight away and he undertook that everything possible would be done to rehouse the collection in one place.

Picture: ROGER MARDON

HISTORY: Bromley steamer at the museum

"Whilst it is disappointing the museum will have to move, I am encouraged by this support for keeping the collection together. Every effort must now be made to find somewhere where this can be done."

The museum opens one day a week and includes artefacts including videos of fire, photographs, and a hollowed out tree trunk used as an underground water main.

The fire service said: "We have teams of staff who need to be located at our HQ in order to run the service and we do not have room to house them. This means we have to look at all options and freeing up space taken up by the museum has to be considered."

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Resilient Haiti will rise again, says aid worker

By STEVE KNIGHT
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

A CHARITY worker who helped locate victims of the devastating Haitian earthquake says she is confident the nation will recover from the disaster.

Naomi Morris, 26, from Sandgate, near Folkestone, was a passenger on the first British aid plane to reach the crisis-hit Caribbean country, which was rocked by the catastrophic quake on January 11.

She was part of the MapAction team that uses mapping and satellite technology – as well as information from text messages, emails and other sources – to provide aid agencies and search-and-rescue teams with up-to-date information about blocked roads or collapsed buildings and bridges.

Miss Morris said: "The city of Port-au-Prince itself is devastated and there has been huge destruction of buildings.

"There are lots of big piles of ash with body parts in them where people have had to burn their loved ones, so it's been very hard and everyone has had to be as resilient as they can.

Humanitarian

"But I've been impressed with how the country as a whole is getting on with things. While it will take years to rebuild the place, I think the people themselves will be able to turn things around very quickly."

Within hours of the magnitude seven earthquake hitting Haiti, MapAction had set up two teams to help with the recovery effort.

One helped organise the search-and-rescue teams while the other co-ordinated the humanitarian aid operation, including the locating of IDP (internally displaced persons) camps.

Miss Morris spent almost three weeks in Port-au-Prince before returning to the UK last weekend, but spent just three days at home before returning to the Caribbean on Wednesday for a further three-month stint.

Miss Morris said: "We get the information by any means possible. Some of it was coming in through emails and text messages, and some was from the families of people actually trapped beneath the rubble.

"Unfortunately many of them would have died because it was a week until the phone lines were up and running and therefore a week until all the texts came through.

"It's frustrating because you really want to do everything you can to help but sometimes technology goes against you, like it did when everything was knocked out by the earthquake."

Since 2004, MapAction has helped in 20 emergencies including the Asian tsunami, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods and tropical storms.

Miss Morris has been a volunteer with the charity for more than two years. In that time she has been involved in operations in the west African nation of Burkina Faso – which suffered from heavy flooding in September, 2009 – and Papua New Guinea.

She said: "The support network and teamwork that goes on in disaster areas is invaluable, with everyone supporting and keeping an eye on one another.

"I've been OK, but I've not had much time to think about things. It's probably a good thing that we're so busy so that we don't have to.

"MapAction has given me the opportunity to be involved and I'm just doing everything I can now to help the recovery effort."

• ***Visit www.mapaction.org.uk to find out how you can help support the charity.***

DEVASTATING: Naomi Morris amid the ruins of Haitian capital Port-au-Prince

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THE MOTORISTS' NO.1 CHOICE FOR CROSSING THE CHANNEL

By CHRIS MURPHY

125th birthday appeal to help Armed Forces

HEROES: The SSAFA wants your fundraising help

AN ORGANISATION that helps Armed Forces personnel is 125-years-old this year.

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) helps those currently in the military and servicemen who have left and are in need.

The Kent branch has unveiled a special campaign – SSAFA 125 – which is being launched with a service of celebration at Westminster Abbey on February 18.

Suresh Khanna, the county's director of public affairs for the group said: "To mark our 125th anniversary we are launching Target 125 and asking everyone to 'Be a Hero' and raise £125 for SSAFA Forces Help in 2010.

"Every contribution will help us to meet our pledge to support our troops and their families, now and for the rest of their lives.

"As the number of fatalities and serious injuries sustained in Afghanistan continues to rise, SSAFA's family support groups are playing a vital role in helping relatives come to terms with loss and life-changing injuries.

"To date, 254 British servicemen and women have lost their lives in Afghanistan and this number increases by the day."

He said almost every parish in Kent has a connection with the Armed Forces so it was important to raise as much money as they can to provide service personnel with assistance.

He said: "Working in extremely dangerous and challenging circumstances, SSAFA Forces Help continues to provide our servicemen, women, and their families, with the practical support they need.

"Over the course of more than a century SSAFA has adapted and evolved to meet the changing needs of our Armed Forces."

Conception

The organisation was founded in 1885 to support troops and families of the second expeditionary force to Egypt. One of its current patrons is Prince Michael of Kent.

As well as fatalities, many servicemen and women return home from warzones seriously wounded.

SSAFA's two recently-opened Norton Homes, in Birmingham, and Ashstead, Surrey, allow injured troops to spend time with their loved ones away from the hospital environment where they are being treated, giving them the opportunity to do normal family things such as eat a meal together or simply watch a film.

David Culmer, chairman of the south-east London branch said: "In Bromley and Bexley we are running events throughout the year; lookout for our flag day on February 13 in local supermarkets, our quiz night for Heroes on May 14, and our fabulous band concert in October."

To help go to www.ssafa125.org.uk or phone the Kent county secretary on 01580 891507.

• A Castle Ball is being held at Lympne Castle on February 27 to raise money for the Help for Heroes charity.

Party-goers can explore the entire castle and tuck into a curry feast and creperie. There'll be a live jazz band followed by a disco in the castle's grand ballroom.

It has donated more than £23 million to help servicemen and women since its conception.

Being raffled and auctioned on the night will be a pair of Andy Murray signed shorts, artwork signed by the Kaiser Chefs, and signed CDs from Tom Jones, Sting, and The Stereophonics, plus a host of other celebrity items.

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Tickets can be purchased by phoning 01496 860296.

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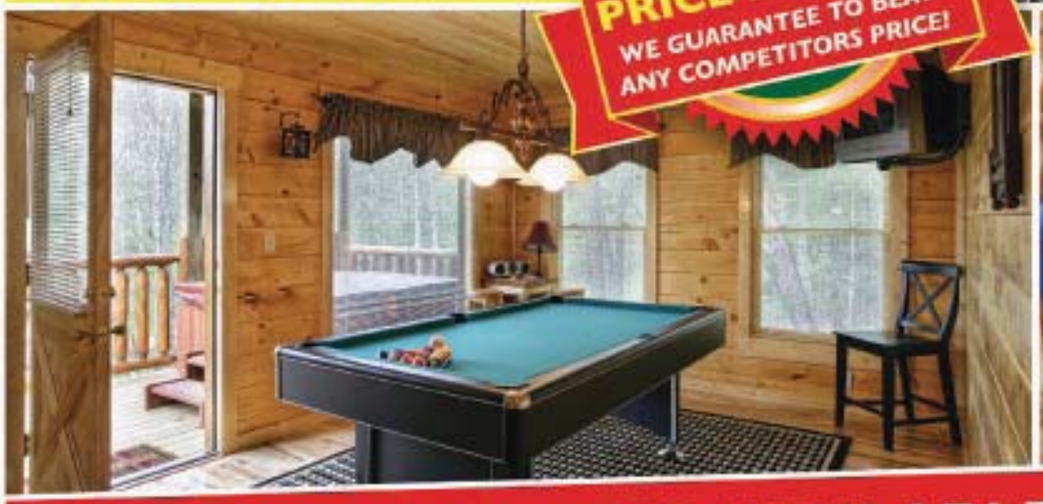

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New bishop vows to help those souls lost to society

THE Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams has officially welcomed his new right-hand man to the parishes of Kent, ***writes Marijke Cox***.

Bishop Trevor Willmott formally takes on the role of Bishop of Dover and Bishop in Canterbury at an installation ceremony this weekend.

The 59-year-old, who has moved to the city of Canterbury from Hampshire with his wife Margaret, will now spend his time carrying out the Archbishop's duties while Dr Williams is away on national and international business.

Despite the daunting task ahead of him, Bishop Trevor said he is excited and ready to start the role, which was previously held by the Right Reverend Dr Stephen Venner.

"I have no worries about taking this on – I'm really looking forward to meeting people and finding out what they're about," he said.

"I'm here to care for the community foremost and bring the good news of Jesus to people."

He stressed he will also be focusing his attention on those who steer clear of religion.

"The local church should be a place of warmth and welcome even for those who may not be religious," he said. "I will try and show them what it means to us. They might start to ask some questions."

The avid cricket fan, who has become a Kent supporter since his recent move to the county, admitted the Church was not his first choice of vocation.

"I thought I was going to be a lawyer. Then when I was 20 or 21 I suffered a major road accident which led me to question a lot of things in my life," he said.

"Out of that grew an awareness that ordination and ministry might be the right way forward for me."

Bishop Trevor said his two passions are rural life and helping people who are living on the fringes of society.

WELCOME: Bishop Trevor Willmott

"I've got a lot of commitment for rural life and experience in working with rural communities," he said.

"But I also work closely with people on the edges of society, like homeless people or those in prison.

"I have worked in prisons all my life and have used my energy to try and help – we are all children of God regardless of our circumstances."

Asked how he will be different to his predecessors, Bishop Trevor said: "I think we all try to build on the person that was there before us.

"But I believe the handover is from the community – the real lessons come from the people who live here."

He said he has been looking forward to taking over from Dr Venner, who has become the Anglican Bishop for the Armed Forces.

The Dr Venner was at the centre of controversy in December when he made comments about how the Taliban could be admired for their commitment to their faith. He later apologised.

Bishop Trevor said: "I think his comments regarding the Taliban were misunderstood."

Bishop Trevor now starts his work on behalf of the Archbishop and diocese of Canterbury, which stretches from Maidstone to the east coast.

To report non-urgent crime and anti-social behaviour, call Kent Police on **01622 690690**
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Food crisis in Africa a 'disgrace'

Agricultural experts calling on Government to do more to help fight famine on continent

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

AFRICA'S poorest people will continue to starve unless the UK Government rethinks its international spending strategy, scholars have warned.

Researchers at the Medway-based Natural Resources Institute (NRI) say it is "disgraceful" that world hunger is still such a huge problem when modern farming techniques are readily available to help ease their suffering.

The NRI – run by academics from the University of Greenwich – was one of several groups that contributed to a Parliamentary study into global food security entitled Why No Thought for Food.

Perfect storm

Director Dr Guy Poulter told KOS Media he hoped the report would focus cross-party and wider public attention on the key issues of agricultural development.

He said: "We recently reached a sad landmark in that there are now more than a billion hungry people in the world.

"Despite the modern farming techniques around today there are still famines in Africa, which is disgraceful in the 21st century.

"Years ago Asia also had big problems with famine, but now there is sufficient food to feed the people – not that they're not still very poor.

"The situation in Africa has been referred to as a perfect storm due to the combination of climate change, rising food prices and the use of foodstuffs like maize for biofuels. That equates to a crisis."

The Parliamentary inquiry received about 130 written submissions and took oral evidence directly from 29 of the UK's most experienced experts on agricultural development – including Dr Poulter.

Its conclusion was that at least 10 per cent of the Government's overseas aid budget should be spent on farming and agriculture.

Other groups that contributed to the report include Action Aid, Christian Aid and the UK Food Group.

Dr Poulter said: "The NRI and the other groups involved in the inquiry have a long-standing concern that the UK – and DFID (the Department for International Development) in particular – has downgraded and even ignored support to Africa for a long period of time.

"The UK is trying to increase the amount of money it spends on international development, and rightly so.

"But over the last 10 to 20 years DFID hasn't been paying enough attention to supporting agriculture in Africa when it should have been. But it's good that the international community has admitted it lost the plot and that it needs to invest in agriculture again.

"But it's a long-term commitment and not one that can be switched on and off.

"We need to start rebuilding and looking at appropriate means to increase food production so developing nations can take ownership of their own issues."

Last month the UK Government set up a £20 million emergency aid programme for victims of the Haiti earthquake, helping more than 350,000 people gain access to food, clean water, shelter and medicine.

However, Dr Poulter said such hand-to-mouth methods were not sustainable in the long term.

He said: "It's the old story about give a man a fish and he won't go hungry for a day, but teach him to fish and he'll never go hungry again. I don't think there's been enough of that in the last 10 to 15 years."

County town top 10 for car security

MOTORISTS can rest assured their cars are secure on the streets of Maidstone after it was named one of the UK's top 10 safest places.

The town was listed eighth in a national survey for the fewest number of car thefts and is only one of two towns in southern England to make it into the top 10.

Det Insp Kris Hill, of the tactical crime investigation department at Maidstone, which investigates vehicle theft, said: "We're delighted Maidstone has been named as one of the safest places in Britain when it comes to vehicle theft.

"This is supported by the recent Home Office crime figures, which show a 23.5 per cent fall in car crime from July to September 2009, equating to 171 fewer victims compared with the previous year.

"However, this doesn't leave room for complacency – we are continuing to find increasingly sophisticated ways of targeting criminals who commit vehicle crime, which is leading to greater detection and deterring would-be thieves."

The figures, released by insurance company Endsleigh in its annual motor theft index, have also been welcomed by Maidstone and Weald MP Ann Widdecombe.

She said: "This is a testament to the care and attention residents take with their cars and belongings and also to the hard work of the council and police force that ensures the highest standard of safety awareness.

"Despite this, I am conscious that more than can always be done to encourage residents to remain cautious and keep both their belongings and themselves safe."

The report is based on figures for stolen cars and possessions found in them, such as iPods and satellite navigation systems.

The results are collected by analysing motor claims during the last three years from Endsleigh policyholders in the UK.

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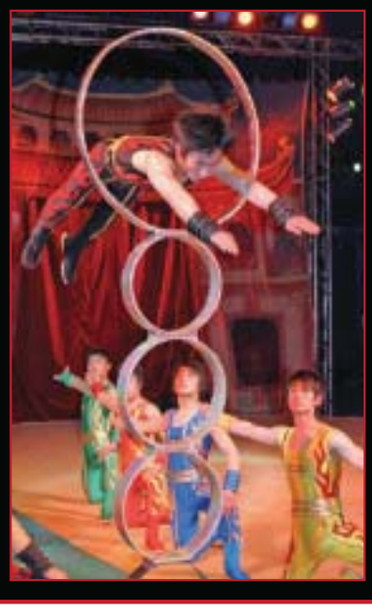

Two for one tickets for the Chinese State Circus

THE Amazing Shaolin Warriors bring their live action to Dartford with the Chinese State Circus.

Presenting their new acrobatic spectacular, Mulan, The Chinese State Circus are coming to The Orchard Theatre in Dartford from Thursday, February 11, to Sunday, February 14.

A breathtaking fusion of precision acrobatics, Shaolin martial arts, dazzling circus skills, colourful characters from Peking Opera, physical theatre and drama choreographed to an original music score, Mulan is based on the legend of one of China's greatest heroines.

The Chinese State Circus provides entertainment for all the family: from gravity-defying gymnastics to the seemingly impossible body manipulations of the hand-balancer; from the leaping, rolling somersaulting repertoire of the hoop divers to the lavish tradition of the Lion Dance, the undisputed masters of physical theatre will have the audience on the edge of their seats.

We have a great reader offer for all KOS Media readers – two tickets for the price of one to see the warriors in action.

They are available on performances on Thursday, February 11, at 8pm, and Friday, February 12, 5pm and 8pm. Simply call the ticket office on 01322 220000 and quote 'Mulan Offer' at time of booking.

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Who will protect the police?

Internet campaign takes a stand against solo patrols

By **STEVE KNIGHT**
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

A WOULD-be policewoman who set up an online protest against solo patrols says she will sacrifice her dream if it means keeping officers safe.

Erith resident Angi Butcher, 39, has designs on becoming a police community support officer (PCSO) but admits her Facebook campaign – which has already attracted more than 1,200 followers – could harm her future job prospects.

Dozens of negative comments have been posted on the social networking website, the majority of which are aimed at the Metropolitan Police where Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson has spearheaded the move to sending out beat officers on patrol alone, and where Mrs Butcher wants to work.

She said: "One of our bobbies was assaulted just before Christmas and was on his own at the time, and I just thought as a small woman would I really want to go on lone patrols?

"I set the Facebook group up thinking only a few friends and family would join, so I'm amazed by how quickly it has taken off.

"Supposedly police have a bad reputation and everyone hates them, so it's nice to see how much support they are receiving.

"The police are there to protect us, but who is there to protect them?

"Their job is dangerous enough without making it even more so by asking them to go out on patrol alone.

"I know the publicity might not do my job prospects any good, but if this campaign means single patrols are rethought, then fine."

Of those who have signed up to the Facebook campaign, more than 300 are thought to be Metropolitan Police officers.

According to press reports, Scotland Yard officials are said to be concerned about some of the messages posted on the site.

ON THE BEAT: The campaign is protesting at officers going on patrol by themselves

Yet despite the apparent support for solo patrols to be reviewed in London, Kent Police Federation chairman Ian Pointon said it was not an issue in Kent.

He said: "It's important to take a pragmatic approach to things because there are times when it is perfectly sensible for officers to patrol on their own, just like there are times when the converse applies.

"By and large Kent Police gets things right but there are always occasions where the unforeseen occurs.

"But would we send one officer to deal with a drugs den? Of course we wouldn't.

"It's about things being properly risk-assessed. I'm not a subscriber that people need to be in pairs all the time, and I think in Kent we have reached a sensible compromise."

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Beautridge said the decision as to whether officers or PCSOs go out alone or in pairs is made by a supervisor following a risk assessment.

He added: "There are legitimate circumstances where police vehicles or foot patrols can be carried out by one person, but there are circumstances under which double-crewing may be more appropriate.

"Kent Police strives to provide the best possible service to the public when we are in a position to respond to calls for assistance, by having the right number of staff, with the right equipment, in the right place at the right time."

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BEEFEATER GRILL

Homeless 'slip through the net'

By MARIJKE COX
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

A CHARITY for the homeless has taken a step forward in the nationwide fight to end rough sleeping by 2012.

Porchlight, which was named as a champion in the Government's No One Left Out campaign, held a conference last week to bring together different agencies from across Kent to help the plight of vulnerable, homeless people.

The Canterbury-based charity also commissioned a piece of research by the University of Kent called Slipping Through the Net which revealed how rough sleepers and service providers view each other.

Homeless people, local authorities, mental health units, prison and probation services and housing providers were interviewed as part of the study.

Chief executive of Porchlight Mike Barrett said the research was conducted to find out how to stop vulnerable, homeless people slipping through gaps in the system.

"What I want to do is build on what the report is saying and take a more joined-up approach," he said.

"What we've seen is that provision for single, homeless people is not really co-ordinated and therefore it is easy for some people to slip through the net and not get help."

NUMBERS: Mike Barrett (inset) says Porchlight is trying to quantify the real number of homeless people in Kent

According to the research, the extent of homelessness in Kent is difficult to quantify.

Different types ranging from rough sleepers to sofa-surfers and the 'hidden homeless' not living independently, means true figures are hard to collate.

A count at the end of last year by Porchlight found 23 people sleeping rough in the county's 13 districts, with evidence of a further 31 homeless.

But Gill Bryant, outreach strategic area manager, said at the time that the real figure was more like 200.

The different definitions of 'homeless' was highlighted at the conference as the reason so many vulnerable people are passed from one agency to another, in many cases causing them to vanish into the system altogether.

But Mr Barrett said regardless of what situation a person is in, they should be able to get the stability they need though the county's services.

In 2008-09 in Kent and Medway, 1,159 households were accepted as homeless and in priority need for council housing by local authorities, but 44 per cent were rejected.

Although there are no official figures, research suggests that agencies are housing three times as many homeless people as councils.

Porchlight itself has four accommodation projects – in Dover, Canterbury, Ashford and Ramsgate.

Mr Barrett said single homeless people interviewed in the study felt they were being pushed from "pillar to post".

"The fact many individuals in our society are already frightened, frustrated and angry may go someway to helping practitioners understand why vulnerable people vanish or do not respond positively to being told they need to find their own way," he said.

"This is in a housing market that is out of reach in terms of affordability and supply.

"We hope the report is received in a spirit of co-operation and is the catalyst to get agencies, organisations and government talking about how we can work better in partnership."

Asked whether he believes rough sleeping can be wiped out by 2012, Mr Barrett said: "It is possible, but what is really important is that we maintain that.

"It must not be for the short term – the problem is not going to go away, we have to keep working at it."

Firms must not slip up on safety at work

MORE than one person a day was seriously hurt at work last year, according to the latest figures from the Health and Safety Executive.

In all, 453 people in Kent suffered major injuries from things like slips and trips, the most common cause of accidents.

Forty people were killed in the UK.

Nationally, they cost the country around £800 million a year in lost days at work.

In all, 799 people took three or more days off in the county to recover from being hurt.

There were 1,232 slip, trip or fall related injuries in Kent, and a county law firm has underlined the importance of getting health and safety right at work to save injuries and a small fortune.

The HSE has now launched a fresh phase of its Shattered Lives campaign to reduce the most common accidents with the launch of a new website offering practical advice and guidance.

The main sectors where the most accidents happen are health and social care, education, food manufacturing, food retail, catering and hospitality, building and plant maintenance, plus construction.

On the website advice ranges from how to deal with spills and other slip risks, to the importance of using ladders correctly to reduce the risk of falling from height, the number one workplace killer in the UK.

Mike Walters, principal inspector for the HSE in Kent, said: "These figures highlight the real and serious nature of preventable slip, trip and fall incidents in the workplace.

"They might sound funny, but they shatter the lives of thousands of British workers ever year."

Douglas Skilton is an associate at law firm Thomson Snell & Passmore, which has its HQ in Tunbridge Wells and an office in Greenhithe.

He said: "With the risk of ever-increasing fines and the imprisonment of individuals a sentencing option for most health and safety offences, it is vital for directors and managers to think about what practical steps they can take to protect themselves and their businesses.

"A good starting point would be to review your health and safety policy to ensure it is up to date.

"Risk assessments are crucial to accident prevention – they inform what reasonably practical steps an employer must take in order to discharge its health and safety duties.

"Businesses would also be well advised to check the extent of their insurance cover and in particular whether senior managers and directors will be covered by company policy in the event they are personally prosecuted."

• ***For more information visit www.hse.gov.uk/shatteredlives.***

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Breakthrough in war graves mistake quest

By STEVE KNIGHT
steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

A FAMILY tree researcher who discovered mistakes on the war graves of a tragic young couple has made breakthroughs in his quest for information.

Gravesend pensioner John Franklin, 71, made it his mission to correct the errors at Holy Cross Church in Bearsted, near Maidstone, and has spent six years contacting relatives and gathering information about two of the people remembered there.

JOHN FRANKLIN

George and Pamela Lawrence (née Thorpe) had been married for just five months when Pamela, who was a senior cipher clerk in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, died in an air accident in January, 1943.

Her husband died in similar circumstances just over a year later.

Mr Franklin appealed for help in tracing relatives of the couple after discovering Mr Lawrence's age was a year out on his tombstone, while the date of his wife's death was also incorrect.

The errors can only be rectified if a relative gives consent.

Mr Franklin said: "An article in your newspaper led me to a close relative of Pamela's. She had very little knowledge about her but was delighted to have made contact.

DATES WITH DESTINY: The Lawrence headstone at Bearsted

"She and I, along with an elderly Bearsted resident who at one time was actually led by Pamela in the Brownies, filled in a lot of the gaps.

"But with George I was running into blanks everywhere, to the extent that I could do very little research on him for about two years."

After taking advice from staff at the Kent Studies Centre in Maidstone, Mr Franklin contacted a local newspaper in Woking, Surrey, for help in finding Mr Lawrence's nephew, Mark, who he knew had lived in the town at one point.

The appeal worked and led to Mr Franklin also getting the chance to meet Mr Lawrence's brother and sister-in-law.

He said: "I spoke to them at length. They had very little knowledge of what had happened to George during the war, but I had this young man's life history in my hands and was able to copy it all for them. They had a seven-and-a-half minute clip of George and Pamela's wedding on 35mm film that they burned onto a DVD for me, which was brilliant."

Mr Franklin said he would not pressure the relatives he had met into correcting the mistakes, which he puts down to a combination of poor arithmetic and scruffy handwriting on the headstone instructions.

He said: "I just got the bug with this thing. There will come a day when I reach as far as I can go, but I just thought it was something that should be recognised.

"If the relatives are happy to let it lie, then that's fine. I have plenty of other things to be getting on with."

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Man jailed for attacking teen with porcelain cup

A THUG has been jailed for three years after smashing a porcelain cup into a teenage schoolboy's face.

Aaron Hopkins, of Tennyson Avenue, Cliffe, was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court after pleading guilty to a charge of grievous bodily harm.

The court heard how Hopkins, 20, attacked his 14-year-old victim at a Cliffe house in the early hours of Sunday, August 9, 2009, after an argument turned violent.

Hopkins armed himself with a cup before hitting the youngster in the face. The boy was left with a deep cut to his face, which may never heal.

Following sentencing Det Con Clare Gibson said: "Hopkins showed a clear intent on causing an injury."

ONLINE: Derek Wyatt MP

iPhone app offers public chance to interact with MPs

By CHRIS MURPHY
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A KENT MP has launched the world's first 'app' for the iPhone to help put the public in touch with their parliamentarian.

In fact, Derek Wyatt hopes governments around the world will take it up to spread democracy.

It goes live on Thursday, February 11.

The member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey said: "There is no reason why elected politicians the world over shouldn't want to engage with the people they serve in this way.

"I certainly hope that now people know it can be done, and that citizens want to engage in this way, my colleagues at home and abroad take this idea and make it even better for their constituents."

'Digital inclusion'

Mr Wyatt said the app will enable people with the high-tech phone to see what their MP is doing in their area, and inform them of any concerns and give their opinions.

The application will list MP's surgeries and allow members of the public to hold discussions with Members of Parliament.

Mr Wyatt said the idea was conceived when it became apparent the public wanted their MPs to be more accountable to them.

With tens of thousands of constituents and just one MP to go round, he said there was a need for an easier way to communicate on a mass level.

It is the first time that smartphone technology has been used in this way to help bridge the gap between parliamentarians and the general public, and is part of Mr Wyatt's drive to promote 'digital inclusion' in his constituency.

The Labour member, who is standing down from the Commons at this year's general election, said: "Now people can alert me in real time to any issues that I need to address, and they don't have to visit my website to find out what I'm doing.

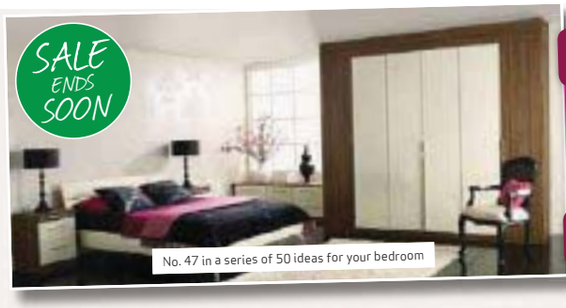
"This is a new way to encourage people who are not particularly engaged in technology or politics to get involved.

"I believe this is the way of the future and hope other MPs will follow suit."

The app was built by public sector digital agency, Public Zone, and is available free of charge from the Apple iTunes store.

Public Zone intends to roll out the MyMP app, which also integrates with Google Maps, to other MPs this month.

A FITTING START TO THE NEW YEAR



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KENT ON SUNDAY

COMMENT

So, farewell and thanks to Fuller

IT'S SAFE to say Mike Fuller experienced more than his fair share of trials and tribulations throughout his six-year stint as Kent's chief constable.

The Securitas robbery, Folkestone earthquake and the policing of the Tour de France – not to mention the thousands of burglaries, assaults and murders – equate to an extraordinary period in charge.

It is no surprise that Mr Fuller has forged a strong reputation and Attorney General Baroness Scotland has taken full advantage by appointing him chief inspector of the CPS.

That's not to say he hasn't faced controversy, none more so than his force's handling of the Kingsnorth Climate Camp protest.

The fallout over civil liberties issues has threatened to tarnish his reputation.

When he landed Kent Police's top job back in 2004, much was made of Mr Fuller being Britain's first black chief constable.

But there are now many in Kent who believe he was simply one of Britain's best.

Screen idol Scally

GILLINGHAM chairman Paul Scally will become a film star when a new comedy about the club hits cinema screens next month.

The low-budget flick is about a group of supporters who travel to watch their team face Newcastle United in the FA Cup.

Here's hoping the fictional Gills have a better away record than their real-life counterparts, because at the moment there's nothing funny about that.

OPINION: Talking is the only solution

West's Afghan strategy is now part of the problem, says MP Adam Holloway

THE first duty of any government is the security of the people. Here in Gravesend, well intentioned 'political correctness' has made us all less safe, but not as much as the well intentioned debacle of Nato's involvement in Afghanistan.

What we are doing there makes irrational bombers – out to kill residents of Kent – far more likely. The Taliban are not international terrorists, unpleasant though the hardcore are.

In fact there are hundreds of groups, most of whom are no more than traditional Afghan Muslims, the sons of local farmers. The same was true when I spent time there in the 1980s, but then I travelled with what we called 'the resistance'. Then as now, they are united not by Islam, but the presence of foreign troops in their areas, and hatred of central government in a country that has never felt like a country in rural areas. Deadly ideological extremists are the minority – about 80 per cent of 'Taliban' dead die within 20 miles or so of where they live. Does that tell you something about who we have really picked a fight with?

If we are serious about doing the right thing by our own and the Afghan people, we need to separate the ordinary Afghans and non-ideological fighters from the hardcore Taliban. The key element to any success in the insurgent Pashtun areas is deal making. There needs to be a credible central negotiating partner for the Taliban groups to talk to. The corrupt government of President Karsai and the brother he has appointed to do the negotiations are not that. Like it or not, the Afghans we have been fighting – virtually all of them – have a place in Afghanistan's future.

Making deals with tribes, subtribes, villages, networks, even up to the gates of wherever Mullah Omar now hides. This would involve football pitch-sized hangars of hundreds of analysts and Afghans, looking at the provinces right down to district and village level – mapping personalities, motivations, tracking and listening to telephone calls – so we know who controls where and is aggrieved by what.

You might think this a no-brainer, but we aren't doing it. If we could do this properly, we really could separate these ordinary people from the super-extremists in Pakistan. Pakistan is the heart of the insurgency. Whatever the Pakistani political class tells us, they see everything through the prism of a future war with India, and the danger of a pro-Indian country to Pakistan's west.

Unless pressure is put on the Indians and the Pakistanis, the Taliban leadership in Pakistan will remain comfortable; so not on the run, communicating, and able wait out the collapse of public opinion in the West without any pressure to make a deal.

The British Government tells us the solution to our problem is our exit strategy: a strong Afghan national security force and yet more NATO military operations. It sounds sensible to us in the UK. Alas, what this really means is a large army mainly composed of Afghans from the northern ethnic groups who would replace us in the areas of the country where the fighting is taking place.

But in these areas, such ethnic groups are complete outsiders to the Pashtun villagers. This is like there being an insurgency in Wales and having a Scottish army with some Welsh officers imposing the will of a British Prime Minister from a gangster family. Do we first create an insurgency, then pay for a large army of an alien state to fight it?

A few weeks ago a former friend of both Osama Bin Laden and Mullah Omar stayed with me in Gravesend. I asked him if more Western troops was the answer.

"More casualties, more economic cost to you – which is what Osama wants – more disorganisation in your chain of command, so more Afghan casualties, more reaction from the population, more perception of occupation. And anyway, more will never be enough."

There is no perfect answer, but it is done by local politics, not big armies. In Afghanistan and across the Muslim world, the challenge is to separate populations from extremists. Since 9/11 we have only made our problem worse. It is time to realise the answers lie beyond combat operations.

• Adam Holloway is the MP for Gravesham and a member of the Defence Select Committee. He regularly travels to Afghanistan at his own cost. He is a former soldier and ITN reporter.

A bridge to the future

That Kent County Council is investigating the feasibility of an additional Thames Crossing is most welcome.

Delays due to congestion at the Dartford Crossing cost business millions. These delays deter commercial and industrial investment in Kent. KCC is thinking of promoting new high-speed railways as well as the additional Thames Crossing. Our decision-makers should combine these two ideas.

There is an urgent need for a new high-speed line between Ebbsfleet and Stansted. Such a route would entail a second rail link from Kent across the Thames.

Advantages of the high-speed line I am suggesting include:

- Provision of a much-needed railway from Kent to a major airport;
- New links to Cambridge, Peterborough and Birmingham, among other places, using either new track or existing lines;
- Relief for the new line between St Pancras and Ebbsfleet, demands on which will soon exceed capacity;
- Additional use of the railway between Ebbsfleet and Ashford, which cannot now be exploited fully because of commuter traffic nearer London;
- Diversion of road traffic from the Dartford Crossing and motorways to the rail network, meeting environmental imperatives;
- Construction of part of a railway around London – a rail equivalent of the M25.

The new railway would benefit the nation as well as Kent. When the Channel Tunnel was opened there were unrealistic ideas, never implemented, for sleeper trains from Scotland, Wales and northern England.

However, the line I am suggesting could bring major benefits by enabling passenger and freight trains to run from East Anglia, the Midlands and further afield to Kent and the Continent.

The UK is desperately short of both public and private sector investment capital. But neither Kent nor the nation will regain economic prosperity without investment in transport infrastructure. Because most of our trade is within Europe, new railway links to the Channel Tunnel must be a priority.

As part of such a link, the railway I am suggesting would play a crucial role in future economic development.

Frederic Stansfield, Canterbury

KCC 'vision' is a nightmare

The county council's "ambitious vision" for Kent, as reported by KOS Media last weekend, shows once again the Conservatives' passion for concreting our countryside with roads.

Their plans will push more cars onto the roads, more planes into the air and ensure Kent increases its carbon footprint to way beyond its already ridiculously high level.

It also seems the Tories simply don't understand that when you build more roads to 'ease' gridlock, the roads simply fill up with cars again.

It should be obvious that the only long-term solution to gridlock on the roads is to get people travelling by other means and to leave their cars at home.

A third Thames crossing will do nothing but devastate the land it crosses while encouraging more traffic. Equally, their support for expansion of Manston airport demonstrates a complete lack of care about the environment. Air traffic is the fastest growing source of emissions and climate change is set to devastate Kent's coastline unless serious action is taken.

The Conservatives are never going to do this while increasing air and road traffic.

Stuart Jeffery, Green Party parliamentary candidate, Maidstone and Weald

I'm tested to the limit

Your story about M20 variable speed limits made me wonder. I noticed all the camera warning signs going up (though covered) and graduation lines appearing on the road with, one supposes, all the camera equipment put in place and tested.

But then it must have dawned on the Highways Agency it had failed to go through some form of mandatory consultation period before the work started. So it would seem any consultation was a lost cause, as the agency was hardly likely to take it all away again.

Democracy is a wonderful thing, when you can get it.

Terry Hudson, Herne Bay

A criminal waste of life

Reporter Steve Knight should know that the dreadful incident in Ashford was not an accident (Jailed drink-drive killer Stanko 'caused carnage', KOS Media, last week).

People are not jailed for having an accident. He committed several crimes, not least of them driving while under the influence of alcohol. In the UK as a whole, of 223,423 drivers breath-tested between December 1 and January 1, some 7,638 were arrested.

According to a Government report, that number is on our roads, threatening themselves and other road users. However, that is not exactly accurate, when it represents only three per cent of those breathalysed.

It is safe to say that it presents only a snapshot of the UK's 30 million drivers and suggests there could be closer to one million drivers on our roads, under the influence, at any one time. And then there are those under the influence of drugs, medicinal and (so-called) recreational.

Ted Prangnell, RoadPeace, Ashford

Perfidious about Albion

Last Monday night saw the culmination of the process to rid the people of Ramsgate of Albion House.

The idea that with the Town Council having made the decision to move to the Customs House, Albion House can be saved for the community is pie in the sky.

I believe the move is ill thought through, many of the reasons I made clear on the evening in my argument to not move the Town Council office – but there is another reason.

Where will all the furniture, paintings, pictures, plaques, and other memorabilia go?

There certainly will not be room for it all in the Customs House, so sold off or stored?

Ramsgate is not 'kiss-me-quick' like Margate; it is heritage and architecture and history, or it was until Monday night, when the Town Council decided otherwise.

So thank you, Town Council, especially Mr Ramsgate and Mr Ramsgate First, who led the charge to move to Customs House and rid us of Albion House.

Cllr Steve Ward, Ramsgate Town Council

Letters continued on page 32

YOUR LETTERS

KOS Media welcomes your comments and letters for publication. Please send correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR. Alternatively fax them to: 01303 817002, or email them to editorial@kosmedia.co.uk. Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances. Please also include a daytime telephone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit letters.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

Including family announcements in partnership with the Kent registration service

To register Births, Marriages and Deaths contact the Kent registration service on 0845 824 7400
For advertising announcement enquiries telephone Kent on Sunday on 01303 817150

BIRTHS

DONNELLY
Hughie and Andrea are delighted to announce the birth of Kyler John Hubert on 20th January at 1:16pm, born at home in Whitstable weighing 7lb 5.5oz. Baby brother for Caden and Alec.

EVANS-COE
Libby Grace born on 22nd January 2010, weighing 6lb 8oz. Daughter to Andrew and Joanna from Larkfield.

HERBERT-LINCH
Claire and Ben are delighted to announce the arrival of their first son, Braydon Robert Herbert-Linch. Born on 23rd January 2010 weighing 7lb 11oz.

HUGHES
Kris and Kirsty of Westgate-on-Sea celebrate the birth of their son Jack on 21st January 2010. Welcome little brother for Loui.

HUTCHINSON
Joseph Harry John born on 13th January 2010, weighing 8lb 8oz. Son to Lucy and Gavin, brother to Joshua.

JASWAL
Kuljit and Arpinder celebrate the birth of their little angel Suhani Kaur Jaswal on 28th December 2009.

LEACH
Michael and Louise are very proud to announce the arrival of Beatrice Anna Leach on 23rd January 2010 at Maidstone Hospital.

MOHAMED
Zaara Mohamed born on the 6th January 2010. Daughter to Diwan and Menaka.

TODD
Elise born on 20th January 2010, weighing 8lb 8oz. Daughter to Samantha and Scott in Broadstairs. Mummy and Daddys special little angel.

TUTT
Michelle and Andrew Tutt are delighted to announce the birth of their beautiful daughter Eilidh Lauren Ronald Tutt, born on the 20th Jauary 2010 at 2.50am weighing in at 9lb.

WAGHORNE
Teresa and Mick Waghorne celebrate the birth of their sons Ethan, weighing 2lb 11oz, and Callum, weighing 2lb 1oz, on 7th January 2010.

WRIGHT
Matthew and Sarah Wright would like to announce the arrival of Jack James Wright on the 16th January 2010 at the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital Margate.

DEATHS

APPLEBY
Richard Terence of Ramsgate, formerly of Rugby passed away peacefully on 26th January 2010. Funeral to be held on 8th February 2010. Please contact Twyman and Holmes (tel no 01843 852758) for details.

CAGE
Lorna Cage peacefully on 29th January. Beloved wife of the late Merlyn. Loving mother of Robert and Sarah. A special Nanna to Oliver, Georgina, Imogen and Harriet. Funeral Service St Peters Broadstairs, 1.45pm Monday 8th February. All Welcome. Family flowers or donations to the Pilgrims Hospice, Care of Gore Brothers, Birchington.

CHATWIN
Dennis Chatwin of Dover passed away peacefully after a short illness on the 23rd January 2010, aged 81years.

HATTON
Kit Hatton of Sittingbourne, the much loved mum of Jim, Tom and Jeannette, passed away peacefully on 1st February 2010 after a short illness. The funeral service will be at 10am on Thursday 11th February at The Church of the Sacred Heart in Sittingbourne. Friends welcome. Enquiries to R High & Sons, Sittingbourne.

HOLLAND
Pauline Margaret Holland died peacefully following a long illness at Chestfield Nursing Home. Much loved Mother to Stephen, Deborah, Graham and Jason, devoted wife to Gerald. Funeral Service to be held at Barham on 2nd February at 4:40pm. Charitable donations for the Parkinsons Society or Cancer Research via Woollard and Kent Tankerton.

MATHLIN
Benjamin Mathlin, who passed away on the 27th January 2010 at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital. Will be sadly missed by wife and family.

PHEBY
Edith Florence Pheby (formerly of Harrietsham) died peacefully on 1st February 2010 surrounded by her family. She will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

REAP
John, Engineer at Letraset. Passed away 20th January 2010. Funeral to be held at Charing Crematorium on Wednesday 10th February 2pm. Enquiries to Earl & Co, Ashford, telephone 01233 620522.

THORNE
Ernest Thorne otherwise Roy Thorne, passed away peacefully on the 24th January 2010.

Letters continued from page 31

Final disgrace of Blair

Tony Blair's evidence to the Chilcot Inquiry has confirmed my worst fears. He took the country to war to satisfy his own ego, regardless of the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqis and hundreds of British troops.

Blair has disgraced the Labour party and should be prosecuted as a war criminal before the International Criminal Court at The Hague. Gordon Brown's actions in forcing Blair's resignation as Prime Minister has saved the party from political oblivion and eternal odium.

Donald Worsley, Labour parliamentary candidate, Folkestone and Hythe

Euro takes a pounding

The Lisbon Treaty, Article 122, states that where a member state is in severe difficulties, the Council of Ministers may grant financial assistance. No country can veto such a decision.

If Greece is unable or unwilling to fix its deficit, a bailout is the only way to stop the euro from disintegrating.

According to Open Europe, under the terms of the treaty, Britain will have to contribute and our share of the Greek bailout will be £7 billion, or higher if other struggling eurozone countries are excused their share.

We in the UK are already borrowing £178bn this year, of which £10bn is going to EU bureaucracy. The Lisbon Treaty could cost Britain a further £50bn if we are roped into a major rescue. Why should we prop up the euro, which is a currency we don't want?

Victor Webb, UK Independence Party parliamentary candidate, Tunbridge Wells

She's our golden girl

I read with interest of your campaign to get Dame Kelly Holmes awarded the 1500 metres gold medal from the 2003 World Indoor Championships, won by an athlete later found to have been taking drugs.

There is no place for drugs in sport and Dame Kelly clearly deserves the gold. She believes in fair play, dignity and honour in sport. I have witnessed her passion and enthusiasm for sport first hand and her ability to inspire and motivate is legendary.

Awarding Dame Kelly the gold medal would send a powerful message across the globe that cheats don't prosper.

Chris Hespe, head of sport, leisure and Olympics, KCC, County Hall, Maidstone

Given a fighting chance

This year the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association Forces Help celebrates its 125th anniversary.

At a time when members of our Armed Forces are working in extremely dangerous and challenging circumstances, SSAFA Forces Help continues to provide our servicemen and women and their families with practical support.

Over the course of more than a century the SSAFA has adapted and evolved to meet the changing needs of our Armed Forces. Founded in 1885 to support the troops and families of the second expeditionary force to Egypt, the charity's work is as relevant today as it was then. As the fatalities and serious injuries sustained in Afghanistan continue to rise, SSAFA's family support groups are playing a crucial role in helping relatives come to terms with loss and life-changing injuries.

Our two Norton Homes allow injured troops to spend time with their loved ones away from the hospital environment, giving them the opportunity to do normal family things such as eat a meal together or simply watch a film. And each year our network of trained volunteers assists 50,000 people ranging from World War Two veterans and National Servicemen to members of the Territorial Army. To mark our anniversary we are launching Target 125 and asking everyone to 'Be a Hero' and raise £125 for SSAFA Forces Help in 2010.

Whether you can run 5km, swim a mile, parachute from 12,000ft, do a sponsored silence or sit in a bath of baked beans, every contribution will help us to meet our pledge to support our troops and their families, now and for the rest of their lives.

To find out more, visit our website at www.ssafa125.org.uk or call 020 7463 9373.

If you think SSAFA Forces Help can assist you or someone you know, or you are interested in becoming a volunteer, contact us on 0208 639 0495.

David Culmer, chairman, south-east London branch, SSAFA Forces Help

Superb Haiti response

After the earthquake in Haiti, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched its appeal in the UK to provide emergency aid to the three million affected by the disaster.

To date, a magnificent £50 million has been raised by the appeal, including £22m in the South East.

Public generosity has secured the funding for immediate short-term emergency work and, crucially, any new donations will now be spent on helping Haitians recover and rebuild their lives over the next three years.

On behalf of the DEC, we would like to say thank you to readers for their generous support and to confirm that donations are still very much needed. Either by visiting www.dec.org.uk, calling 0370 60 60 900 or going into any Oxfam shop. Thank you.

Nadya Herrera Catalan, DEC

Tiltman at windmills

Iain Tiltman is quite wrong (Letters, last week). He thinks the future is nuclear. Not in Kent, where Dungeness C will not be built because the site is unsuitable and subject to rising sea levels due to climate change.

Not easily in the UK at all, since the energy industry wants the Government to pay for new nuclear power stations and the Government says it won't.

He thinks the future will involve coal. Not in Kent, where the indefinite delay to a new Kingsnorth coal-fired power station is in part because of requirements that it capture at least a quarter of its carbon emissions. Since the technology for large-scale carbon capture and storage does not exist yet, and 100 per cent capture of emissions is necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, this power station may well never be built.

However, both the present and the future include the wind farms on Romney Marsh and Kentish Flats (already built), the Thanet offshore wind farm and the massive London Array in the Thames Estuary. Our future includes greater efficiency in Kent's buildings to cut energy bills. Solar water heating units and solar panels for electricity will quickly become as common as satellite dishes.

Mr Tiltman dismisses human-induced climate change – without evidence. The consensus opinions of our own Met Office, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, NASA, and the scientific academies of 13 countries (including our own) are that climate change is a real and existing threat.

The evidence is compelling.

Dr Hazel Dawe, Kent Green Party

Slow-moving disaster

In reply to Mr Grainger (Letters, last week), firstly the Green New Deal includes the setting up of a Green Investment Bank (GIB). This needs to be run on a social enterprise basis, to help prevent the profiteering and bonus culture that brought about the current economic debacle.

The GIB could be used to help people make the changes to their homes in terms of solar panels, insulation, etc. Indeed, a recent YouGov poll indicated that people would like to do a lot more to upgrade their homes to eco-friendly standards. The GIB could also assist councils to bring housing stock up to sustainable standards, and businesses would also be helped to 'go green'.

As for the world population problem, this was taken from a recent BBC Horizon programme presented by Sir David Attenborough. I do not advocate doubling our population, just ensuring a better distribution of resources. This could be done via the proposed Tobin tax on international transactions. But it would have to go direct to the people, not the elites who have syphoned off such aid in the past. We should expand fair trade schemes, which have seen a 30-fold increase in the last 10 years. Do we really need green beans from Kenya when most farmers there exist on a subsistence basis?

Research for the BBC's Countryfile showed that the wastage of food by, in the main, UK retailers and supermarkets, amounts to four times as much as could adequately feed the 6.8 billion people now on the planet.

As for the destruction of rainforests, especially in South America, this is now being changed in places such as Brazil as they realise the dangers to both their populations and their flora and fauna, as well as from man-made climate change.

On China and India, yes, they are industrialising in the 'wrong' way, to send us cheap goods; but it is surely up to us, who led the industrial revolution, to show more leadership by embracing a renewables-based new industrial revolution and so help the rest of the world change as well.

On the glaciers, yes, the IPCC wrongly included a non-peer-reviewed report on the melting of Himalayan glaciers, but this does not show the rest of the world's glaciers are all right. Most other peer-reviewed scientific reports state the glaciers are retreating. Even the Indian government says they are, but maybe – at the moment – not as fast as was claimed by one researcher. The real scandal is the lack of research. This has to be rectified as scientists now report increases in methane release, a much more potent greenhouse gas, around the Arctic. This would speed up the melting of glaciers and the land ice in Antartica and Greenland.

As for Mr Tilson, he makes all sorts of claims – without providing a single peer-reviewed source – against global warming. Indeed, the deniers have never been able to produce any substantive body of peer-reviewed scientific reports.

Climate change is a slow-moving disaster which is probably, in part, why some still try to refute it or say it isn't happening.

Ray Duff, Folkestone

MPs need reality check

Channel 4 made a dream come true as Liberal Democrat Mark Oaten, Tory Tim Loughton and Labour's Austin Mitchell became lodgers in tower blocks (Tower Block of Commons).

Mr Mitchell refused to slum it, demanding his own flat and takeaways. Mr Oaten got the worst mould-sodden hell-hole, excrement in stairwells, bedded on a sofa with a hamster as companion, his hostess depressed and lethargic.

Mr Loughton had a laugh with a young single mum with a vibrant social life. All three seemed shellshocked by the grim facts of sink-estate reality. The USSR-reminiscent Dagenham flats revealed Labour's betrayal of tenants (there is a strong BNP presence) and the local council's non-compliance with the Government's Decent Homes directive.

MPs' excessive allowances could be solved easily; house them permanently in such tower blocks. Their perks could be ended by tower block housing for academics, civil servants, police, local councillors, heads of service, etc. Then they could voluntarily accept no more than the average wage, out of which they would buy their own TVs, pay council tax and self-fund their own pensions.

The fiscal deficit would immediately become more manageable and all the above-named would be in close contact with the electorate.

Rita Grootendorst, Sidcup

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Two of the best

TWO students at Canterbury Christ Church University have been commended for their achievements in tourism studies.

Joanne Stephens, from Folkestone, received the Canterbury City Council award for best overall tourism management student.

The 27-year-old gained the highest mark in her degree programme and now plans to carry out a PhD in tourism.

Yoana Atanasova, 23, originally from Bulgaria, scooped the Association of Tourism in Higher Education prize for best overall tourism student. Lecturer Dr Marion Stuart-Hoyle said: "Both achieved first-class grades for almost every assignment in their final year, which is an incredible achievement."

Adding to assets

A NEW apprenticeship scheme for the housing industry has been launched to help meet challenges caused by the recession.

The qualification has been developed by Asset Skills, the sector skills council for housing. Chief executive Richard Beamish said it will help improve ability among staff who have had to tackle changes in their work.

He added: "Recent environmental regulations changed the way housing stock is run and maintained, while the downturn created a surge in demand for affordable housing."

Visit the website www.assetskills.org, email enquiries@assetskills.org or call 0845 678 2888 for more information.

Why apprentices are so good for business

By **MARIJKE COX**
marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

EMPLOYERS are being encouraged to take on apprentices through a new cash incentive-scheme launched by South East minister Jonathan Shaw.

The MP for Chatham and Aylesford kicked off the programme on Monday, at the start of National Apprenticeships Week, during a Good for Business seminar at Oakwood House, Maidstone.

The event was hosted by Kent County Council with the National Apprenticeship Service and the Kent Association of Trading Organisations.

Mr Shaw launched the initiative where employers can receive Government funding if they recruit young apprentices.

During the meeting KCC leader Cllr Paul Carter spoke about the benefits of apprenticeships and discussed plans for developing the progression from education to placements with employers.

To highlight the benefits, Bluewater manager Andrew Parkinson was also invited to talk about the shopping centre's own programme of training.

The Bluewater apprenticeship scheme was launched in September as part of the centre's 10th anniversary to show its support to the community.

It aims to teach 16 to 24-year-olds the skills and experience they need for a career in retail, using classroom and placement-based training.

Mr Parkinson said he was pleased to be able to promote apprenticeships at the meeting.

He said: "The Good for Business breakfast seminar was very positive. We are keen to support initiatives that promote apprenticeships and the benefits they offer.

"The Bluewater scheme has received strong support. We are pleased that it is referred to as a role model for implementing such a successful apprenticeship programme and we hope this success and our positive experiences can benefit other businesses looking to introduce similar schemes."

Mr Parkinson put the success down to close work with the centre's partners, including retailers, the management team and Bluewater's own job centre, the Learning Shop.

"This ensures our apprentices receive the best insight possible into the retail industry," he said.

"We hope to continue to develop these partnerships to maximise this opportunity, and to also continue to raise the educational and retail career ambitions of young people."

To promote the scheme, Bluewater apprentices spoke to members of the public last week and registered prospective candidates.

The centre's apprenticeship project is part of a wider programme to promote the Learning Shop at Bluewater.

It provides visitors with information to register for training and employment, and retailers can advertise in-store vacancies.

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First among equals as Dominic takes prize

WELL DONE: Dominic Hurrell, right, with BAE Systems MD Nigel Whitehead

A PRODUCTION engineer has walked away with the first-ever apprentice of the year award at a global defence and aerospace company.

Dominic Hurrell was commended at the inaugural UK Apprenticeship Awards for BAE Systems, held in Manchester.

The 23-year-old, who is based at the company's Platforms Solutions site in Rochester, has worked on a series of manufacturing and assembly projects, including avionics systems for the Boeing 777.

As well as his commendation he was also named technical apprentice of the year.

He said: "Winning this award means a huge amount to me. I have had lots of hands-on experience and learnt so much in a relatively short amount of time.

"University isn't right for everyone and I would encourage young people to think seriously about the apprentice route."

A further three awards were given to apprentices in Rochester.

Daniel Hawkins won the best business award, Charlotte Tingley, the community achievement award, and Gary Dawson, the business support award.

Jonathan Whitworth, HR director at BAE Systems in Rochester, said: "This scheme has been highly valuable in gearing up our business for the future with a pool of bright and intelligent talent.

"The whole experience has provided worthwhile employment and progression opportunities for local people."

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Experienced Carers
£459.06 per week, per placement

We provide 28 days respite, full training and support and other benefits

Hythe House Support Ltd.
Independent Fostering Agency with Independent Schooling

For an informal chat and more information please call Hythe House Support today

01795 438634
www.hythehousesupport.co.uk

WILMOTHS

THE CITROËN DEALER

Due to the continued expansion of the Wilmoths Citroën Group, we have the rare opportunity for a **Trainee Sales Executive**.

With currently five Citroën garages across the south east, our latest branch at Maidstone, after its first full year of trading needs to continue its progression by acquiring an enthusiastic and self motivated individual who wishes to be in control of their own future.

An aptitude towards wanting to succeed is what we are seeking as full training will be provided to the right individual through in-house one to one, manufacturer courses and independent motor trade associates. We are adamant that the successful candidate will be someone who wants a career, not a job.

If you feel that you have the will and the drive to succeed where others would not, then please send your CV with a covering letter to:

Personnel Department,
Wilmoths Citroën Maidstone, Sutton Road, Parkwood, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8RD
or e-mail: sales@wilmothsmaidstone.citroen.co.uk

LENLEYS

require a

PART TIME SALES PERSON

for their furnishing fabric department, selling curtains, blinds, wallpaper, soft furnishings etc. The successful applicant will have experience in this, or associated areas, and be required to work at least 3 days per week [approx. 24 hours which can be flexible] some Saturdays plus one Sunday each month.

Please apply in writing to John Douch, Lenleys, 25/34 Roper Rd. Canterbury, CT2 7EL or email: softfurnishings@lenleys.co.uk

TECHNICAL MANAGER
REQUIRED

To control the Manufacturing/Servicing Dept of a Laboratory Equipment Company
Experience of the following is required:
production, general development of products, refrigeration systems
good electrical/mechanical knowledge

Salary commensurate with experience

To apply please telephone 01732 743901

NVQ ASSESSOR

DTUK is a young, progressive company looking for NVQ Assessors in Retail, Customer Service & Administration. Our Ofsted Grade 1 along with our embracement of E Learning, we believe, offers something unique to the right individual.
Qualifications not necessary,
just commitment to want to succeed.
Excellent communication & IT skills essential.
Own car is preferable.
Salary will depend on experience.
Please apply online at www.DTUK4LEARNERS.co.uk/JOBS

CHARING HEALTHCARE
are looking to recruit

Night Time Care Assistants

for Residential Care Home in the Maidstone area. Must be flexible with shift patterns. Starting at £6 per hr according to experience. Post is subject to a CRB disclosure.

For further details and further discussion please call **Carol** on **01622 737847**

BODY & MIND LEISURE CLUB
We are looking for an enthusiastic

FITNESS INSTRUCTOR

to work part-time in the gym working within Body and Mind Leisure Club on a rota, which will consist of 2 out of 3 Sundays working 08:30 - 17:00. Qualifications are essential.

Please send your CV to **Lee Whatman, Centre Manager, Body & Mind Leisure Club, Knight Ave, Canterbury CT2 8QA**

Expanding Food Wholesalers based in Goudhurst, Kent
Require the following positions

Night Co-ordinator

Experienced night co-ordinator to ensure smooth running of collecting, picking, loading, and dispatch of customer orders/invoices. Management Experience is essential for this role.

Hours are Sunday – Thursday 11pm – 7am

Night Operation Manager

Work along side the night co-ordinator to ensure the smooth running of the warehouse, you will need to posses strong analytical, organisational, communicational and influential skills. You will be required to identify opportunities for improvement in the day to day service. You must demonstrate a clear understanding of general management duties such as staff management, leadership, development and training along with a sound knowledge of H&S and customer relations.

Hours are Sunday – Thursday 3am – 11am

Letty Battell, HR, Turners Fine Foods, Goudhurst, Kent, TN17 1HE
Tel: 01580 213 356 Email: letty@turnersfinefoods.co.uk

Marketing Assistant

Visit Kent is the official tourism delivery body for Kent. We are a public/private sector partnership supporting Kent's £2.5 bn visitor economy.

We are expanding our team thanks to support from our stakeholders and successful applications for grant aid from the EU 2 Seas Interreg IV A Programme. We are seeking energetic and experienced individuals who first and foremost love Kent and are passionate about encouraging visitors to Kent.

Marketing Assistant

This role will involve all aspects of campaign delivery including PR, online, briefing agencies, printers, and fulfilment house, the production of a range of marketing material and the analysis of marketing results. The successful candidate will have a marketing background with experience of working in the tourism industry and will be a confident, outgoing person with excellent communication skills and ideally proficiency in French.

Salary £17,000 - £20,000

Visit **www.visitkent.co.uk** for more details of the positions and application details.

For further information, please contact Sharon Dawson on 01227 862369 or sharon.dawson@visitkent.co.uk

Closing date for applications: 19th February 2010.

Interviews will be held on 25th February in Canterbury.

This advertisement first appeared on 6th February 2010.

visit Kent

Chart Hills Golf Club
Biddenden
Require a

Chef de Partie

To become part of the team at this celebrated golf course.
Excellent rates of pay for the right candidate
and accommodation available if required.
Apply in the first instance, with CV and covering letter to
Head Chef Jason Wearne.
Email: kitchen@charthills.co.uk
Or by post
Chart Hills Golf Club, Weeks Lane, Biddenden , Kent, TN27 8JX
leaderboard

BRICKLAYERS & HODDIES

required for site in Dover as soon as possible. Must have current CSCS card, also CRB checks will be required.

Please call 07538 435741

Yorke Lodge Guest House
Canterbury require

CHAMBER PERSON

To make beds & clean bathrooms
In 5 star Guest House
4 mornings a week
08:00am - 12noon
Previous experience essential
Tel: 01227 451243

We urgently require
qualified interpreters
any language

Bi-lingual, but not qualified?
We can supply training for professional interpreter qualifications.

For more information call **01273 473986** or email training@southeastinterpreting.com (weekdays only)

Domestic Cleaner

3 to 5 days per week
Must be flexible
Own transport required
References required
Tunbridge Wells and surrounding areas
Excellent pay

Please call 07961 972902 or 01580 752885

Carers Required

at Riverlea House
Dover
For Nights & Days
NVQ preferably
For more information
Please call Mandie Johnstone
tel: 01304 823935

Age & Sons, Ramsgate
Require
Sous Chef and Wait Staff

Must be able to work weekends
Please send your CV to
Email: info@age&sons.co.uk

Mortgage Consultants

We are currently seeking to recruit dynamic, professional, high calibre sales people in the Kent and South East London area, who will enjoy working within the UK's largest and most successful estate agency and financial services organisation, with first class training and support, an excellent basic salary and commission plus a company car.

You need to have a full driving licence, be of smart appearance with a strong desire to succeed.
Applications from Trainee or experienced advisers would be welcome.

Send your CV and covering letter to

carole.mcclelland@kent.cwea.co.uk

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Sure Start Children's Centres

Spring House family support service

Sure Start Children's Centres

Spring House Family Service has recently been awarded the contract to set up Children's Centres in Sevenoaks Town and Westerham. As a result, we are now recruiting a number of new staff to join our existing team. We are looking for people who are enthusiastic and creative, excited about starting new projects, and are able to work in partnership with other agencies. Above all, we want to recruit people who are able to engage with children under five and be able to offer advice and support to their families.

Community Involvement Workers

Salary in the order of £20,000 p.a. pro rata
18 - 37 hours per week, based at Spring House, Hospital Road, Sevenoaks
Your role is to engage the local community in the development of services that address the needs of children aged under five. You will work directly with children and their families, in the centre or in the home, dealing with the initial referral and registration with the centre. You will be able to discuss with the family the nature of the services they require and how and where they might access them. You will have a good standard of education, at least to GCSE level, and be able to demonstrate a level of competence equivalent to NVQ3 in child-care, or have an accredited training in a parenting model. You will also have a full driving licence with the use of a car for work.

Early Years Practitioners

Salary in the order of £16,000 p.a. pro rata
18 - 37 hours per week, based at Spring House, Hospital Road, Sevenoaks
Your role is to plan, organise, and lead play and learning activities within the Centres and in other community settings. You will take responsibility for running crèches within the service and will work together with Spring House colleagues, volunteers and local partner agencies to develop an integrated and holistic approach to pre-school learning and development. You will have a good standard of general education to GCSE level, and an NVQ 3 or equivalent in Childcare. You will also have a full driving licence with the use of a car for work.

Receptionist

Salary in the order of £14,000 p.a. pro rata
21 – 28 hours per week, based at Spring House, Hospital Road, Sevenoaks
This role involves the provision of reception facilities at the Centre, handling telephone enquiries and welcoming members of the public and visitors to the Centre.
You will provide general office clerical services and data input and you may be required to assist with the design and layout of publicity material. You will have a good standard of general education to GCSE level and an NVQ2 in administration or the ability to demonstrate an equivalent level of competence.

Appointments are subject to Spring House receiving a satisfactory enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

For an informal discussion please contact Maree Stephens on 01732 465539.
An application pack and further information can be obtained by either ringing 01732 465539 or emailing admin@springhouse.org.uk.
Closing date: 12.00 noon, Wednesday 17 February 2010. Interviews are likely to take place during the week commencing Monday 1 March 2010.

Spring House Family Service offers good working conditions, and a comprehensive training programme.
We welcome applications from all sections of the community.

Kent Children's Trust

Spring House Family Service
Registered in England No: 2999664. Registered Charity No: 1064677

Kent County Council

Outgoing? Determined? Tenacious? Great Communicator? Self Motivated?

If this describes you then you could be the person we are looking for to join our sales team at KOS Media as a

TELEPHONE SALES EXECUTIVE

Based at our offices in Smeeth, Ashford, working as part of our sales team, the person we are looking for will be responsible for looking after our existing advertisers as well as developing and increasing our client base. In return we offer a good basic salary, a performance related bonus earning opportunity and five weeks annual holiday.

KOS Media is one of the fastest-growing, independent regional media companies in Britain which publishes **Kent on Saturday** the award winning **Kent on Sunday** and ten **Yourlocal** titles, along with seasonal and annual magazines.

If you feel you can meet and exceed these qualities and expectations then please send your CV to:

Ynez Coton, Associate Director,
KOS Media Ltd.,
Apple Barn, Hythe Road,
Smeeth, Ashford, Kent. TN25 6SR

Or e-mail **ynez.coton@kosmedia.co.uk**

KOS media
Award Winning Company

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www.kentnews.co.uk | www.jobsforkent.co.uk | www.yourkenttv.co.uk

Public Sector

You can also find the latest jobs online: www.jobsforkent.co.uk

KOSMEDIA | Telephone: 01303 817040 | Fax: 01303 817004 | Email: appointments@kosmedia.co.uk | Online: www.jobsforkent.co.uk

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TEACHERS AND COVER SUPERVISORS URGENTLY REQUIRED

MAIDSTONE, ASHFORD, MEDWAY TOWNS, THANET & DARTFORD AREAS

Call and speak with friendly, qualified education staff

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A Kent based company you can rely on

Agency

Poplars Nursing Home Require an Experienced RGN
for night duty
Full time
44hrs per week

For an application pack Please contact Philippa or Marion on

01622 752872

To advertise in this section

01303 817040

SALES & MARKETING DIRECTOR

We are a Ramsgate based private school providing English courses for adult international students throughout the year and summer junior courses at other UK locations

You will have the relevant experience and proven skills to develop and execute new marketing strategies to win profitable business. You will be a passionate sales negotiator willing to undertake significant overseas travel. Excellent leadership, teamwork and communication skills are a must.

This is a senior position with a generous remuneration package tailored to attract the best.

CV and current salary to
Churchill House, Spencer Square, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9EQ
Deborah.Cook@churchillhouse.co.uk

Ursuline College

225 Canterbury Road
Westgate-on-Sea Kent CT8 8LX
Phone 01843 834431 Fax 01843 835365
info@ursuline.kent.sch.uk

SPORTS COLLEGES

Specialist Sports College

Roman Catholic Co-educational Voluntary Aided Comprehensive

Teaching Assistant

Posts available for 15 or 30 hours weekly, term time only
Kent Scheme Payscale 3, Points 7-11 (Hourly rate £7.30-£8.28)

Required immediately to support students with Special Educational Needs. Applicants must have a genuine concern for young people and should be able to support pupils up to GCSE level. We are looking for an individual who is self motivated and who would enjoy working as part of a large and friendly team. The right person for this role will possess excellent communication skills and a flexible approach to their work. Experience is not necessary as full training can be given.

Please apply in writing for an application pack, via email to:
vsilk@ursuline.kent.sch.uk
Visits to the school are encouraged
Closing date: Friday 19th February 2010
Interviews to be held Thursday 25th February 2010

Ursuline College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff/ volunteers to share this commitment.

The Royal School of Military Engineering, Chatham

Exciting opportunities for 2010

Programme Area Leader
Salary: £30,312 - £35,000 (2 posts)

Post 1: Carpentry and Joinery
Post 2: Electrical and Mechanical Design Draughtsman

You will be fully qualified and experienced with a good working knowledge of your trade. You may have previous supervisory experience or be seeking to progress in your career. You will be organised, efficient with good communication skills and the ability to get the best out of your team. Previous training experience would be an advantage but is not essential as training will be given. If this sounds like the sort of role that you would enjoy and be good at, then we would like to talk to you.

Commercial Manager - Salary C£50,000

This is a new senior management role working directly for the Managing Director. You will be a Strategic Planner/Thinker with a track record of achievement in a contract environment. Sound financial experience (budgeting/forcasting) is essential as you will need to monitor contract costs, develop benchmarking criteria and ensure contract performance metrics are achieved. You will have excellent communication skills (both interpersonal and written) and be able to demonstrate success in developing new business opportunities within a long term contract environment.

If the challenge of these roles appeals to you: call Ken Pullan on 07725128661 for an informal discussion and/or forward a copy of your CV in the first instance to *ken.pullan@midkent.ac.uk*
Full details of these and other vacancies are available on *www.midkent.ac.uk*
(follow Careers then RSME vacancies)

Closing date: 26th February 2010

The College is committed to Equal Opportunities and to selection on merit. It welcomes applications from all sections of society. We particularly welcome and encourage applications from under represented groups including black, minority ethnic and disabled people.

MKC Training Services is an equal opportunities employer

MKC Training Services Limited
at The Royal School of Military Engineering

Walmer Science College is a vibrant community school for students 11-19 catering for 800 students of all abilities. We also have a Dyslexia Unit, which is able to offer up to four places in each year group for students in the local area. The Dyslexia Unit is housed in purpose built accommodation which was completed in 2006. Walmer Science College is a good school with outstanding features (Ofsted 2007).

Head of Dyslexia Department

Mainscale plus TLR 2B - £2,478 AND SEN Responsibility Payment - £1,956
Required for 1st September 2010

The successful applicant will have experience of supporting students with dyslexia within mainstream lessons and teaching students with dyslexia of secondary school age literacy skills. Having undergone training in dyslexia, you will hold an appropriate qualification, be computer literate and have experience of line management whilst providing CPD sessions for staff.

You will have excellent communication, negotiation, organisational and interpersonal skills with a vision for the future development of the unit; incorporating its role as the Lead School for Dyslexia in the area, which will involve outreach provision.

It would be desirable if you have undergone training in Speech and Language Disorders or are willing to undertake such training.

Application forms and further details are available from the school.
Closing date: 9:30am on Friday, 12th February 2010.

Walmer Science College is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and the successful applicant will be required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure via the CRB. Only applications submitted via the official application form will be considered.

T : 01304 375212 F : 01304 380766
E: admin@walmersciencecollege.co.uk
www.walmersciencecollege.co.uk

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Kent County Council

Salisbury Road, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7QJ

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

KOS MEDIA (PUBLISHING) LTD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Advertisements will be accepted only on the express condition that the advertiser warrants that the advertisement does not in any way contravene any existing legislation and in particular the Trade and Description Act 1968 and the Consumer Credit Act 1974.
2. It is the responsibility of all advertisers to ensure that all advertising meets all forms of government legislation and KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd (the "media owner") takes no responsibility for liability in errors and omissions to the content of our media.
3. All rates quoted are subject to VAT at the rate currently in force at the time the advertisement appears.
4. All rates within the annual advertising agreement will be rate protected for 12 months from the first date of publication under the signed agreement.
5. Any unsuitable material posted on any website belonging to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd by the advertiser or any associated third party will be removed or refused. All passwords and security supplied to the advertiser by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd in relation to the use of the posting of material via the media owner's online administration tool will be the responsibility of the advertiser. The advertiser indemnifies KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd against any damages as a result of misuse of these privileges by either the advertiser or any third party given password privileges by the advertiser.
6. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to change passwords intermittently to ensure the overall and ongoing security of its websites within the public domain.
7. Copyright and licenses for voice-over/music/photography or film for advertising promotions or otherwise within the various forms of media in print, online and moving film owned by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must have been sought, verified or paid for by the advertiser where applicable. Approval or permissions must have been given by any potential beneficial owner voice-over or music. The advertiser must be able to verify any statements or claims (promotional or otherwise) in relation to their products/services promoted within any of the media offerings belonging to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd.
8. Where shrinkage of an advertisement occurs for whatever reason, the advertisement will be charged to the nearest full centimetre where it relates to the media owner's printed publications. This will NOT apply to full-page advertisements, which remain full pages even after shrinkage.
9. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to omit or refuse any advertisement/commercial/web content without notice or explanation. In these terms the word "advertiser" shall be construed to include any person or organisation placing an advertisement on behalf of another.
10. A guarantee of insertion cannot be given and the media owners shall not be liable for any loss or damage caused by any error inaccuracy within your marketing content. In no case shall the total liability of the media owner for any error or omission exceed the price charged by the media owners for that advertising.
11. No liability is accepted for any loss or damage alleged to have arisen through delay in forwarding replies to Box numbers, however caused, nor for the loss or damage to any artwork supplied.
12. Claims for any error or inaccuracy in your media messages with KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must be made in writing to the accounts department within 10 days of publishing.
13. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions made on their websites by the advertiser.
14. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd has the right to cancel the advertiser's annual membership without notice should the advertiser deliberately publish out of date material or content on any of the media owner's online digital platforms. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd will seek to recover, in full, all outstanding invoices in relation to the signed annual membership as a result of the advertiser's negligence in this regard and reserves the right to claim damages for any potential vexatious action via the advertiser.
15. Advertisers are requested to check their advertisements after the first insertion. The media owner will not be responsible for any errors on subsequent insertions, which have not been advised to them in writing.
16. A minimum of one month's notice must be given in writing for any cancellation of the signed annual advertiser's agreement. Upon cancellation, all discounts from KOS Media's standard effective media advertising rate card (July 2008–June 2009) will be recalculated and adjusted accordingly in line with KOS Media's standard media rate card (effective July 2008-June 2009) and will reflect the revised length of commitment denoted by the advertiser's written cancellation. Any surcharges, refunds or costs in relation to the production of the advertiser's TV commercial for the commitment set out within the advertiser's agreement will be met in full by the advertiser as per KOS Media's standard media advertising rate card (July 2008–June 2009). Discounts will be reapplied and any refunds or surcharges will be paid by either party within 30 days of the advertiser's written cancellation. Any other advertising placed must give a minimum of seven days' written notice and any discounts given for series bookings will be forfeited by the advertiser upon cancellation.
17. Seasonal contracts, Your Professional classified advertisements or any uplift advertising within the annual contract with the advertiser will be invoiced in full - at rate card - on receipt of any written cancellation of this contract within the 12-months.
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20. Each advertiser accepts that their ranking and position within KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd's search engine will be equal to those within their category (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, etc) other than they will be ranked based on the search engine criteria of optimisation within their level (Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze).
21. Any delivery claims made by the advertiser or discount vouchers published within the print or online media of KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd and any action as a result of the public or otherwise is the sole responsibility of the advertiser. Any claims resulting from this via KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must be met by the advertiser.
22. a. All credit accounts due for payment shall be notified to the Advertiser by the 30th day following the date of the invoice, time to be of the essence. All sums due to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd or RBS Factoring shall be paid in full, and the Advertiser shall have no right of set off in any circumstances.
    b. In the event that payment is not received by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd or RBS Factoring by the due date, the media owner shall be entitled to suspend all further advertising until payment is received and/or repudiate the contract and make any surcharges for breaking the contract.
    c. In the event that payment is not received by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd by the due date, the media owner reserves the right to charge interest on all overdue balances calculated on a daily basis at the rate of two per cent above the minimum lending rate of National Westminster Bank Plc from time to time in force.
    d. Not withstanding anything in these terms and conditions or implied to the contrary, in the event of the Advertiser ceasing to use the services of KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd (for whatever reason), the whole amount of monies due from the Advertiser to the date of cessation shall fall due for immediate payment.
    e. The Advertiser will be liable for all costs incurred by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd in the recovery of debts not paid by the due date.
    f. Payment may be made by cheque, credit transfer, direct debit, cash and any major credit card.
23. Any discount which KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd may have agreed with the Advertiser shall be forfeited in the event of failure by the Advertiser to complete the contract or to meet the above credit terms.
24. Advertising Agency commission will be allowed to those advertisers recognised by the Newspaper Society, but shall not exceed ten per cent and will be subject to the terms of that recognition. This commission will not be allowed if the Advertising Agency fails to meet the terms.
25. All private advertisements and certain categories as laid down by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must be prepaid.
26. The Advertiser agrees to indemnify KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd in respect of all costs, damages or other charges falling upon the media owners or any of the companies within the KOS Media Group as the result of legal action or threatened legal action or threatened legal arising from the publication of any advertisement or advertising promotion.
27. An order for an advertisement shall amount to acceptance of these terms and conditions, and any condition placed on an order by an Advertiser shall be null and void in so far as it conflicts with them.
28. Copyright in advertisements produced wholly or partially by the media owners belong to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd. Advertisers may not reproduce such advertisements without the media owner's written consent.

All terms and conditions stated above are in place to protect the advertiser, the media owner and the communities they serve within the public domain as well as the beneficial rights of individuals and organisations. KOS Media will endeavour to always act reasonably in applying its terms and conditions.

Effective from June 2008

Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR
Tel 01303 817040 Fax 01303 817004
Email: info@kosmedia.co.uk

KOS media

Award winning publications

www.kentnews.co.uk

MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint outstanding individuals in the following areas:

Lecturer in Hair
Ref: P0389

22.2 hours per week
Salary: £22,653 - £26,395 pro rata
Maidstone

We have an exciting opportunity to recruit a passionate individual to teach, assess and contribute to the development of Hair Design programmes. The applicant must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and should hold, or be willing to work towards, a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous. Please note, hourly paid positions are also available. Please indicate when submitting your application which post you are applying for.

Lecturer in Holistics
Ref: P0345

Salary: £22,653 - £26,395 per annum
Maidstone

We are looking to recruit a dynamic and enthusiastic Lecturer in the Beauty Department to deliver high quality training and assessment procedures to full and part time learners. The applicants must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and have, or be willing to work towards, a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous. Please note, hourly paid positions are also available. Please indicate when submitting your application which post you are applying for.

Lecturer in Plumbing and Heating
Ref: P0315

Salary: £28,042 - £31,782 per annum
Medway

An opportunity has arisen within the Construction & Building Services Faculty for a Lecturer to contribute to the delivery development and teaching of Plumbing, Heating and Gas programmes. This post will offer an exciting opportunity to develop and deliver Level 3 Building Services programmes. The ideal candidates must have a current knowledge and practical experience of the Building Eng. Services Industry; have sufficient teaching experience and resources to deliver Level 3 programmes. You must have a recognised teaching qualification; an Advanced Craft Certificate, including Mandatory Awards in Water & Gas and possess either a D32/34 or A & V Awards. Please note, hourly paid positions are also available. Please indicate when submitting your application which post you are applying for.

Lecturer in Engineering/ Civil Engineering
Ref: P0678

Salary: £22,653 - £27,476 per annum

We are looking to recruit an outstanding individual to teach and participate in the development of programmes across the Faculty which includes Electronic, Electrical, Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering disciplines. The successful candidate will possess qualities of reliability, have good communication skills and hold an HNC/HND/ Foundation degree or higher in one or more of the above Engineering specialism's. Previous industry experience is essential. The ideal candidate will hold or be willing to work towards a recognised teaching qualification.

Hourly Paid Lecturer in Catering
Ref: SE134

Hourly Rate: £24.42 - £27.05
Medway

We are looking to appoint a passionate individual to teach on a variety of practical catering qualifications, facilitating student learning and achievement. The applicants must have a relevant vocational/ academic qualification and have, or be willing to work towards, a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Hourly Paid Lecturers in Engineering
Ref: SE456

Hourly Rate: £24.42 - £27.05
Medway

As a Sessional Lecturer you will be required to teach across the Faculty of Advanced Construction & Engineering at all levels from First/National up to Foundation Degree. Candidates would need to have a minimum HNC qualification and be a specialist in at least one of the following Engineering disciplines: Mechanical, Plant & Processes, Manufacturing, Electrical, and Electronics.

Closing date: Wednesday 10 February 2010

MidKent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBLI, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBLI on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the HR department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

MidKent College is an equal opportunities employer

Action for Business College · Investors in Diversity · Positive About Disabled People · RBLI · Investor in People

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The smart way to find a job in the County

Marlowe Academy

Stirling way, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6NB
www.marloweacademy.co.uk

Graduate Teacher Training Programme

Starting 1st July 2010 in both Mathematics and English Salary: £15,817

We offer an exciting opportunity to work in Kent ' s first Academy where we continue to challenge traditional approaches and to drive up standards. Our students are offered innovative and challenging learning experiences. As part of your training package you would be supported by experienced and enthusiastic staff.

Candidates must have a degree in a related subject, have left university for a least a year before commencing training, and have some experience of working with children.

Interested?

Then download further information and an application form from our website or contact the school.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Enquiries or visits to the Academy are welcome.

Please contact Jennifer Spooner, HR Manager, on direct telephone number 01843 598550 or email jenniferspooner@marloweacademy.co.uk

The Marlowe Academy is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and the successful applicants will have to undertake Enhanced Disclosure via the CRB.

The closing date for both posts is: Friday 19th February 2010

Teachers Needed

Primary, Secondary and SEN.

Capita Education Resourcing is the leading provider of educational staff throughout the UK.

Our dedicated and friendly Kent team can provide you with:

- ✔ Daily/weekly/termly supply opportunities
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- ✔ Free use of resource centre
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Even if you can only spare one day a week we would love to hear from you.

To find out more information and to register with us, please call us free on:
0800 731 6871
or email enquiry.ers@capita.co.uk

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(Agy) Committed to equal opportunities

To advertise in this section ✆ **01303 817040**

The Folkestone Academy — Academy Lane, Folkestone Kent CT19 5FP www.Folkestoneacademy.com

Marlowe Academy — Stirling Way, Ramsgate Kent CT12 6NB www.marloweacademy.co.uk

Spires — Bredlands Lane, Sturry, Canterbury Kent CT2 0HD www.spiresacademy.com

Group Personnel Manager

Working across three academies in Folkestone, Ramsgate and Canterbury

Salary range ~ Academies Band 11: £35,901-£41,316 p.a

We offer an exciting opportunity to work across three academies where we challenge traditional approaches to drive up standards. Our students and staff are offered innovative and challenging learning and work experiences.

Candidates must have CIPD qualifications and experience of working within Human Resources in a complex organisation. An education background would be an advantage.

Interested?

then download further information and an application form from our websites

We look forward to hearing from you.

The closing date posts is: Friday 19th February 2010

Enquiries or visits are welcome.

Please contact Jennifer Spooner, HR Manager The Marlowe Academy, on direct telephone number 01843 598550 or email jenniferspooner@marloweacademy.co.uk

The Academies are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and the successful applicants will have to undertake Enhanced Disclosure via the CRB.

THE THOMAS AVELING SCHOOL

(A Foundation Technology College)
Arethusa Rd, Rochester, Kent ME1 2UW
Headteacher: Mr P Jackson, BSc

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Tel: 01634 844809 Fax: 01634 818385
Email: office@thomasaveling.co.uk Website: www.thomasaveling.co.uk

Home School Support Worker

37 hours per week – (term time only + 3 weeks)
Salary: NJC Scale C1, point 17-26 pro-rata (£16,830 - £22,221 fte)

We seek to appoint from April 2010 a Home School Support Worker to support families whose children are experiencing difficulties and to help them participate fully in school activities.

The successful candidate will be expected to liaise with the school Children's Team and be able to offer:

• Experience of working with children and families • Good communication skills
• An ability to mediate, negotiate and problem solve • A willingness to work with other agencies

On appointment, the HSSW will be part of the Medway Home School Support Worker Network and have access to training and a link supervisor.

It will be essential for the successful applicant to have a clean driving licence and to be willing to work outside of term time and beyond school hours as required.

Job Description available on request.

Cover Supervisor

Term Time – 31.25 hours per week (Term time plus 5 development days)
Salary: NJC Scale D2 point 12 – Point 21 (presently £15,039 - £19,126 fte)

A rewarding opportunity has arisen for a pro-active organised and self-motivated person to join a successful and over-subscribed secondary school to provide teaching cover supervision across the school and cover for absent colleagues as required to a maximum of 25 lessons per week. In addition, the successful applicant will be required to support student behaviour management systems and may occasionally be required to undertake other reasonable tasks commensurate with the role as may become necessary from time to time.

The position additionally represents a good opportunity for anyone considering a career in teaching to gain valuable experience in a teaching environment.

CLOSING DATE FOR BOTH VACANCIES: WEDNESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2010

Interviews to be held w/beg 22 February 2010

(please note only short-listed candidates will be contacted)

Please send your letter of application, clearly stating to which position you are applying, together with a completed Application Form (available on the school website) and CV to: Mr.S.Rayner, Finance and Business Manager, to the above address.

The Thomas Aveling School is an equal opportunities employer – committed to safeguarding the welfare of all students and an enhanced CRB check will be required for the successful applicants.

To advertise in this section ✆ **01303 817040**

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Saint George's

Church of England School Humanities College
Meadow Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7LS
Tel: 01474 533082 Fax: 01474 561536
HEADTEACHER: Mrs A Southgate BDAKC

Church of England, Voluntary Aided, Humanities College
11-18, Mixed, Comprehensive School

Teaching Assistant (Behaviour)

KS4 Pts 11-14 £15,984 - £16,793
30 hours per week, 39 weeks per year
(Pro-Rata pay £10,936 - £11,490)

We are seeking an experienced Teaching Assistant to join our team.

We are looking for someone who has:

- The ability to work constructively with young people and to manage challenging behaviour
- A patient, calm and positive approach
- The ability to apply firm and consistent boundaries

Saint George's C of E School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, celebrating diversity and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All appointments are subject to List 99 and enhanced CRB checks.

Previous applicants need not apply.

Contact us to request further details and an application form.

Email dhariwalj@saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk or visit our website www.saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk

Closing Date : 10 February 2010

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JobsforKent.co.uk

A selection of the 100s of Local Jobs online

Accountancy

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
Maidstone
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Whitehouse Jeep Maidstone
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email Yvonne.root@whitehousegroup.co.uk

Purchase Ledger Clerk
Thanet
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Piper Windows
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email ron@piperwindows.co.uk.

Administration, Secretarial, PA

Secretary
Tunbridge Wells
Salary: TBA
Closing Date: Monday 8th February 2010
To apply/more information: Leonard Cheshire Disability
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01892 531138
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Administrator
Deal
Salary: £17,574 pro rata
Closing Date: Monday 1st March 2010
To apply/more information: Carers Support - Dover District & Thanet
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email mel@carers-doverdistrict.org

ADMINISTRATOR/ OFFICE SUPPORT
Swanley
Salary: £14,000 to £18,000 p.a.
To apply/more information: Holleran Infastructure Services Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01322 661523
Email geoff.hopkins@holleran.co.uk

Receptionist
Sevenoaks
Salary: £14,000 p.a. pro rata
Closing Date: noon, Wednesday 17 February 2010
To apply/more information: Spring House Family Service
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01732 465539
Email admin@springhouse.org.uk

Catering, Hospitality

Sous Chef
Thanet
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Age & Sons
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email info@age&sons.co.uk

Chef de Partie
Ashford
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Chart Hills Golf Club
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email kitchen@charthills.co.uk

Child Care

Residential Childcare Workers
Swanley
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: J and R Care Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01474 871999
Email jnparish@aol.com

PLAYWORKERS
Canterbury
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Canterbury & District Early Years Project **Quoting Job Ref:** kos
Tel: 01227 786420
Email admin@canterburydeyp.org.uk

Construction, Architecture, Surveyors

Fabricator/Welder
Medway
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Porters Craft Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01634 255725
Email info@porterscraft.co.uk

Senior Estimator/Bid Manager
Dartford
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Livis Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01322 220058
Email hr@livis.co.uk

Assistant Project Manager – Nights
Swanley
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Livis Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01322 220058
Email hr@livis.co.uk

Method Statement Author
Swanley
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Livis Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01322 220058
Email hr@livis.co.uk

BRICKLAYERS and HODDIES
Dover
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: JKS Brickwork Contractors Ltd
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 07538 435741
Email katie@jks-group.co.uk

Domestic

Weekend Domestic
Faversham
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Carnalea Residential Home
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01795 532629
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Domestic Cleaner
Tunbridge Wells
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Seldaw
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01580 752885
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Chamber person
Canterbury
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Yorke Lodge
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01227 451243
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

Education, Teacher, School

Teacher of Mathematics
Aylesford
Salary: Main Scale
Closing Date: 8th February 2010
To apply/more information: Jill McKenna
Aylesford School - Sports College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 717341
Email jill.mckenna@aylesford.kent.sch.uk

Teacher of English
Aylesford
Salary: Main Scale
Closing Date: 8th February 2010
To apply/more information: Jill McKenna
Aylesford School - Sports College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01622 717341
Email jill.mckenna@aylesford.kent.sch.uk

Head of Dyslexia Department
Deal
Salary: See Below
Closing Date: 9.30am on Friday 12th February 2010
To apply/more information: Walmer Science College
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Tel: 01304 375212
Email admin@walmersciencecollege.co.uk

Qualified Singing and Drama Teacher
Margate
Salary: TBA
To apply/more information: Jo Jo's School of Dance
Quoting Job Ref: kos
Email applications@jobsforkent.co.uk

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE

We,Turkey Mill Investments Ltd hereby give notice that we have made an application to the Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME15 6JQ for grant of a premises licence to permit the following licensable activities;
1. Sale of alcohol by retail
2. Provision of regulated entertainment
3. Provision of late night refreshment

In respect of the premises situated at Turkey Court, A20, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 5PP known by the sign of Garden Room and Orangery.
The application can be viewed at the offices of Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 8HR during normal office hours.
Any person wishing to make representation concerning this application should do so in writing to the above local authority and within 28 consecutive days of the submission of the application, that is no later than 3rd March 2010.
It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. Any person who makes a false statement is liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of £5,000.
Stephen Thomas LAW
8 Grassmere, Leybourne,
West Malling, Kent ME19 5QP
Authorised Agents for and on behalf of the applicants.

High Court of Justice
Court case number 853 of 2010
GOOD FOOD 2 GO LIMITED
Company Number 06191640
Nature of Business: Process etc Fruit, Vegetables / Manufacture of Other Food Products. Registered Office of Company: 9 Ensign House, Admirals Way, Marsh Wall, London E14 9XQ. Trade Classification: 1533 & 1589. Administrator appointment made on: 1 February 2010. Names and address of Administrators: Simon Franklin Plant and Daniel Plant both of S F P, 9 Ensign House, Admirals Way, Marsh Wall, London E14 9XQ. (IP Nos 9155 and 9207).

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS – NOTICES OF APPLICATIONS

The following applications have been submitted to the Council and are being advertised for the reason(s) given in each case.

TM/10/00024/FL – Park Cottage Addington Green Addington West Malling Kent ME19 5BG – Mr And Mrs Kidd are applying for rear first floor extension. Reason: CA HH

TTM/09/03085/FL – 134 Bow Road Wateringbury Maidstone Kent ME18 5DY – Mr Lesley Blackburn is applying for two storey rear extension. Reason: CA HH

TM/10/00015/FL – 23 Ryarsh Lane West Malling Kent ME19 6QP – Mr Richard Grist is applying for new first floor extension above existing ground floor extension. Reason: CA HH

TM/09/02900/FL – Thorpe Lodge Redwell Lane Ightham Sevenoaks Kent TN15 9EH – Mr John Miles is applying for stables, sand school, swimming pool and change of use of land sand school area to be equestrian. Change of use in stable area to paddock/grazing land. Reason: CA

Reasons for the case being publicised:

CA Application is within/affects a Conservation Area

HH Householder application - As this is a householder application, in the event of an appeal against a refusal of planning permission, which is to be dealt with on the basis of representations in writing, any representations made about this application will be sent to the Secretary of State, and there will be no further opportunity to comment at appeal stage.

These applications are displayed on our website www.tmbc.gov.uk – click on the button "Online Planning" (then View Existing Applications and select Public Access). You can submit your comments by emailing to planning.applications@tmbc.gov.uk (please quote the application number by the date set out below). Please note that we will publish a copy of any representations received on the Council's website, including your name and address.

Copies of applications listed may be seen during office hours (8.30 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday). Any applications within Hadlow, Hildenborough and Tonbridge are available at Tonbridge Castle, Tonbridge. Other applications are available at the office of the Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4LZ. Any representations should be made in writing quoting the application number by 28 February 2010.

David Hughes
Chief Executive

7 February 2010

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications

10/00212/HOUSE **Judds Farm Hayesden Lane, Bidborough**
- Demolition of existing and construction of replacement single storey rear garden room

LB)10/00215/LBC **Judds Farm Hayesden Lane, Bidborough**
- Listed Building Consent: Demolition of existing and construction of replacement single storey rear garden room (LB)

10/00207/FUL **Linden Park Cricket Club Fir Tree Road, Broadwater**
- Retrospective - access path running from the car park to the pavilion (CA)

10/00110/HOUSE **Pearsons Cottage Cranbrook Road, Frittenden**
- Alterations to existing to include velux roof windows in north east elevations and gable windows on north west and south east elevations (CA) (LB)

10/00158/FUL **Jempsons Store Rye Road, Hawkhurst**
- Minor extensions and alterations (CA)

10/00167/LBC **Sisley Farm Sopers Lane, Hawkhurst**
- Listed Building Consent: Extension to existing property with link (LB)

10/00133/FULMJ **Land West Of Kirkins Close Gibbett Lane, Horsmonden**
- Erection of 15 dwellings for local housing needs (MAJOR)

10/00235/HOUSE **Church Cottage Brick Kiln Lane, Horsmonden**
- Single storey rear extension (LB)

10/00240/LBC **Church Cottage Brick Kiln Lane, Horsmonden**
- Listed Building Consent: Single storey rear extension (LB)

09/03890/LBC **Bayham Hall Bayham Abbey, Lamberhurst**
- Listed Building Consent - Re-instatement of party wall on ground and first floors (LB)

10/00061/FUL **Kenmare Camden Park, Pantiles & St Marks**
- Demolition of existing house and garage. Construction of new house and garage. Demolition of section of existing front boundary wall, reconstruction of section of front boundary wall. Improvement of access, drive, parking and turning area (CA)

10/00062/CAC **Kenmare Camden Park, Pantiles & St Marks**
- Conservation Area Consent - Demolition of existing house and garage (CA)

10/00150/FUL **The Meeting House Little Mount Sion, Pantiles & St Marks**
- Part Retrospective - Relocation of cooling units (CA)

10/00091/FUL **Dorothy Perkins & Top Shop 4 Calverley Road, Park**
- Refurbishment of retail unit including shopfront (work commenced) (CA)

10/00217/FUL **34A Camden Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park**
- Replacement windows to front and rear elevations of first and second floors (CA)

10/00233/LBC **8 Calverley Park Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park**
- Listed Building Consent: Removal of existing partition to form kitchen/breakfast room; installation of new cornice and skirting in kitchen/breakfast room (LB)

10/00176/HOUSE **19 Apsley Street Rusthall, Rusthall**
- Single-storey rear extension (CA)

10/00154/HOUSE **Old Chapel House Bodiam Road, Sandhurst**
- First floor rear extension and single storey ground floor rear extension; retrospective application for porch (LB)

10/00162/HOUSE **Bayford House Queen Street, Sandhurst**
- Demolition of front and rear additions to Coach House and replacement single storey side extension; erection of double garage (LB)

10/00164/LBC **Bayford House Queen Street, Sandhurst**
- Listed Building Consent: Demolition of front and rear additions to Coach House and replacement single storey side extension, removal of dormers and rear stairs, internal changes and erection of double garage (LB)

10/00227/LBC **Holmewood House School Barrow Lane, Speldhurst**
- Listed Building Consent - Minor internal alterations to provide classroom space within former dormitories on the Mansion first floor (LB)

(DEVPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of Way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LB) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR) Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

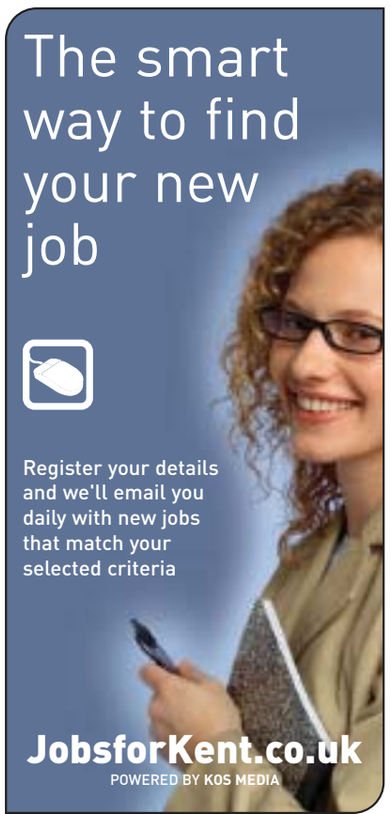
You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at the The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 21 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date.

You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet. We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

Jim Kehoe
Head of Planning Services
Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

Dated: 06 February 2010

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council



HIGHWAYS - District of Ashford

VARIOUS ROADS, ASHFORD
PROHIBITION OF DRIVING TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because carriageway surfacing works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on various roads, Ashford from as described in the schedule to this order on or after 22 February 2010 for an estimated period of as described in the schedule to this order or until such works are complete.

The alternative route for through traffic will be as shown below.

Road Name: **U11217 Greenhill Lane, Egerton**
Extent: Entire Length
Dates: 17 - 23 February 2010
Diversion: Munday Bois Road, The Pinnock

Road Name: **C152 Romden Road, Smarden**
Extent: Entire Length
Dates: 18 - 23 February 2010
Diversion: For HGV C146 Pinnock Road/ Smarden Woods Road, C91 Burnthouse Lane, C44 Bethersden Road. For light vehicles - C493 Pluckley Road/ The Street, Smarden, C44 Bethersden Road.

Road Name: **Pilgrims Lane, Chilham**
Extent: between junction Shalmsford Road and A28 Canterbury Road
Dates: 19 - 25 February 2010
Diversion: C117 Shalmsford Road, A28 Canterbury Road, U12016 Bowerland Lane

Road Name: **U11256 Cot Lane, Biddenden**
Extent: Entire Length
Dates: 22 February and 01 March 2010 excluding the weekend
Diversion: Riverhall Lane, C158 Whitfield Road, A262 Biddenden Road, A274 Headcorn Lane.

Road Name: **U11286 Harbourne Lane, St Michaels**
Extent: between Church Hill and Swain Road
Dates: 23 February and 04 March 2010 excluding Sunday
Diversion: C159 Swain Road, A28 Ashford Road, C160 Church Hill

Road Name: **Bank Road, Aldington**
Extent: between Broad Oak crossroads and Firth Road
Dates: 01 - 05 March 2010
Diversion: Coopers Lane, Chequer Tree Farm Road, Frith Road

Road Name: **Bank Road, Aldington**
Extent: between Firth Road and Calleywell Lane
Dates: 01 - 05 March 2010
Diversion: Bank Road, Flood Street, A20 Ashford Road, Station Road, Goldwell Lane, Calleywell Lane.

Road Name: **Roman Road, Aldington**
Extent: between Calleywell Lane and Forge Hill
Dates: 01 - 05 March 2010
Diversion: Calleywell Lane, Goldwell Lane

Road Name: **C561 Faversham Road, Charing**
Extent: between junction with A252 Canterbury Road and A251 Faversham Road
Dates: 17 - 27 March 2010 including the Saturday
Diversion: A251 Faversham Road, A252 Canterbury Road

Road Name: **A251 Faversham Road, Ashford**
Extent: Vicarage Road junction
Dates: 26 February - 01 March 2010 excluding the weekend for nights
Diversion: A28 Canterbury Road, Simone Weil Avenue, A20 Fougeres Way, Trinity Road

This order will come into force on Monday 22 February 2010, will be in operation when the appropriate signs are erected and will remain valid for a period of eighteen months. The order will allow the above mentioned restrictions to be implemented as and when required for works of similar nature at any time for the duration of the order.

HINXHILL ROAD, HINXHILL
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of tree cutting and aerial replacement works, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on Hinxhill Road, Hinxhill on 26 February 2010 for an estimated period of 7 working days or until the works are complete.

The road will be closed between between the junction with The Street and Court Lodge Farm. The alternative route for through traffic will be via The Street, A20 Hythe Road, Bockham Lane, Plumpton and Hinxhill Road.

HIGHWAYS - District of Dover

SOUTHWALL ROAD, DEAL
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of drainage improvement works, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic on Southwall Road, Deal, on or after 8 February 2010 for an estimated period of 2 weeks or until the works are complete.

The road will be closed between the junctions with Middle Deal Road and Church Lane. The alternative route for through traffic will be via Middle Deal Road, Orchard Avenue and Church Lane.

VARIOUS ROADS, DOVER
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2009 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because Carriageway Surfacing works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic on various roads, Dover from as described in column 1 of the schedule to this order on or after 8 February 2010 for an estimated period of as described in column 3 of the schedule to this order or until such works are complete.

The alternative route for through traffic will be via as described in column 2 of the schedule to this order.

Road Name: **D1966 Kingsdown Road, St Margarets**
Extent: Whole length
Dates: 11 - 12 February 2010 for two days
Diversion: No alternative route

Road Name: **Adisham Road, Aylesham**
Extent: Between Snowdown Road and Cooting Road
Dates: 18, 19 & 21 February 2010 for three days
Diversion: Cooting Road, Spinney Lane, Aylesham Road, Sandwich Road and Snowdown Road

Road Name: **Adisham Road, Wingham**
Extent: Between Love Lane and Seaths Corner
Dates: 17 - 18 February 2010 for two days
Diversion: Staple Road, The Street, School Lane, Lower Road, Fleming Road, Drainless Road, Hammill Road, Sandwich Road, Easole Street, Holt Street, Aylesham Road, Spinney Lane and Cooting Road

This order will come into force on Monday 8 February 2010, will be in operation when the appropriate signs are erected and will remain valid for a period of eighteen months. The order will allow for the above mentioned restrictions to be implemented as and when required for works of a similar nature at any time for the duration of the order

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Maidstone

STATION ROAD, MAIDSTONE
(ONE WAY) ORDER 2009 (CYCLE LANE) ORDER 2009 ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

Notice is hereby given that Kent County Council in exercise of its powers has made an Order under Sections 1 and 2 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984; the effect of which has installed a contra flow cycle lane on a small section of Station Road, Maidstone.

A Copy of the Order which shall come into operation on Monday 8th February 2010, an explanatory statement and a map can be inspected during normal working hours at the Kent County Council Offices, Sessions House, County Hall, Kent ME14 1XQ and at Maidstone Borough Council Offices, The Gateway, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ.

Anyone may, by application to the High Court within 6 weeks of the date of publication of this Notice, challenge the validity of the Orders or of any provision contained in them on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or of any instrument made there under, or that there has been a failure to comply with any statutory requirement in relation to the Order.

GATLAND LANE, FANT LANE , MAIDSTONE
(PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on the entire length of Gatland Lane and Fant Lane, Maidstone when required on or after Monday 8th February 2010 an estimated period of up to 14 Weeks or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for the route described above is via Farleigh Lane, and Tonbridge Road and vice versa.

KHS apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to carry out the construction of Fant Area Traffic Calming. Should you require any further information about these works, their contact is David Ardley on 08458 247800 .

HIGHWAYS - District of Sevenoaks

BASING LANE, COWDEN
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic on Basing Lane, Cowden at the entrance to Scarlett's and Basing and Smithers Farm.

The Order will become effective on 8th February 2010, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to commence 11th February 2010 and last 1 week. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: Smithers Lane Dormansland Surrey, Shepherds Grove Lane Forest Row East Sussex, Holtye Hill East Sussex, Furnace Lane East Sussex and Basing Lane Cowden.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate carriageway patching works

STONE CROSS ROAD, CROCKENHILL (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic on Stone Cross Road, Crockenhill from Tilecroft to Hollymount.

The Order will become effective on 22nd February 2010, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 4 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: Green Court Road.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate BT works.

WESTHAM ROAD A25, CHEVENING
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by vehicular traffic on Westerham Road A25, Chevening.

The Order will become effective on 25th February 2010, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 1 night (22:00 - 05:00) ; the works are planned to commence 25th February 2010 and last 1 night (22:00 - 05:00). These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the route described above will be via: South bound on the slip A21 Sevenoaks bypass taken next off slip A225 Riverhill around Morleys rounderbout straight back on to the 21 North Bound Sevenoaks ByPass exiting at first exit for westrham .

The purpose of the closure is to Resurface Carriageway

HIGHWAYS - District of Shepway

ST LEONARD'S ROAD, HYTHE
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of works to upgrade the wastewater pipeline, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic on St Leonard's Road, Hythe, on or after 8 February 2010 for an estimated period of 8 weeks or until the works are complete.

The road will be closed between the junction with New Road and the junction with Windmill Street. There is no access for through traffic between the junctions of Park Road and Windmill Street. The alternative route for through traffic will be via Park Road and Albert Road.

QUEENS ROAD, LITTLESTONE
PROHIBITION OF DRIVING TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of works to upgrade the wastewater pipeline, the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting traffic on Queens Road, Littlestone, on 8 February 2010 for an estimated period of 14 weeks or until the works are complete.

The closure will be in rolling sections from outside number 4 to outside number 96, as signposted on site. The alternative route for through traffic will be via Station Approach, Littlestone Road and Park Road.

NEW LANE, LYDD
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of the installation of a new electrical supply, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on New Lane, Lydd on or after 22 February 2010 for an estimated period of 7 days or until the works are complete.

The road will be closed outside 'Holcom House'. The alternative route for through traffic will be via High Street, Cannon Street and Park Street

BRACK LANE, BROOKLAND
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of carriageway subsidence, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on Brack Lane, Brookland from 22 February 2010 for an estimated period of up to 4 months. The Order will remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months.

The road is closed between the junctions with Snargate Lane and Grove Lane. The alternative route for through traffic is via Snargate Lane, A2080 Rhee Wall Road, King Street, Harvey Road, Beckett Road and Brack Lane.

HIGHWAYS - District of Swale

SHEPPEY WAY, IWADE
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that to accommodate the transport of an abnormally large load, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on Sheppey Way, Iwade, on or after 19 February 2010 for two consecutive weekends. These are planned to be from 19 - 21 February 2010 and from 26 - 28 February 2010.

The road will be closed between each of its junctions with Old Ferry Road. The alternative route for through traffic will be via Old Ferry Road.

THROWLEY ROAD, THROWLEY
PROHIBITION OF DRIVING TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of cable replacement works, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on Throwley Road, Throwley on or after 22 February 2010 for an estimated period of 5 weeks or until the works are complete.

The road will be closed to through traffic between the junctions of Leaveland Belles Forstal and Housefield Road. The alternative route will be via Leaveland Belles Forstal, A251 Ashford Road, Broomfield Lane and Housefield Road.

PRIMROSE LANE, BREDGAR
10 MPH SPEED LIMIT TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because of the likelihood of danger to the public and workforce whilst repairs and improvements are carried out to the Primrose Lane bridge over the M2, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order on Primrose Lane, Bredgar. The effect of the Order is to impose a temporary mandatory 10 mph speed restriction within the roadworks. This will only be implemented at such times when it is not safe to work without this restriction, and will be operated by means of a "convoy", whilst the roadworks are taking place.

The order will become effective on or after 22 February 2010 for an estimated period of 6 weeks or until the works are complete. The order will only be in force at the specific times when the works are being carried out. At these times, the appropriate signs and temporary traffic signals will be displayed on site. The working hours for this site are between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm.

HIGHWAYS - District of Thanet

MANSTON ROAD, THANET WAY, MINSTER
(PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because Carriageway Surfacing works are proposed to be carried out, the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting traffic on Manston Road, Thanet Way, Minster from as described below on or after 22 February 2010 for an estimated period of seven nights or until such works are complete.

The alternative route for through traffic will be via as described below.

Phase 1:

Road Name: **B2190, Minster**
Extent: from the junction with the B2048 Minster Road to the junction with Alland Grange Lane
Dates: 22 February 2010 to 1 March 2010 as and when signing is in place.
Diversion: B2190 Minster Road, A253 Thanet Way, A253 Canterbury Road West, A256 Haine Road, B2050 Manston Road, B2190. In both directions.

Phase 2:

Road Name: **B2190 Minster Road**
Extent: from the junction with the A253 to the junction with the B2048 Minster Road
Dates: 22 February 2010 to 1 March 2010 as and when signing is in place.
Diversion: Southbound: B2190, B2050 Manston Road, then for Canterbury/London turn left and follow A256 and A253. For Minster, turn right and follow A256 and A253.

Road Name: **A253 Canterbury Road West**
Extent: from A299 Monkton roundabout to Laundry Road
Dates: 22 February 2010 to 1 March 2010 as and when signing is in place.
Diversion: A299 'Mad Mile' and follow A28, A254 (Between Tivoli Road and College Road junctions) High sided vehicles to follow local diversion to avoid low bridge) A256. In both directions.

Road Name: **Tothill Street**
Extent: from Hill House Drive to A253 Canterbury Road West
Dates: 22 February 2010 to 1 March 2010 as and when signing is in place.
Diversion: Eastbound traffic: Tothill Street, Foxborough Lane, The Lanes, Way Hill then follow main diversion.
Westbound traffic: Tothill Street, Monkton Road, Monkton Street and Willets Hill then follow main diversion.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

THE ROCKS ROAD, EAST MALLING
(PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2010 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on The Rocks Road from Chapel Street to Easterfields on or after Tuesday 9th February 2010 for a period of up to 4 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route for the restriction described above is via Sweets Lane and Wateringbury Road.

BT apologise for any inconvenience caused by these essential works, which are necessary to renew an aerial cable to restore service. Should you require any further information about these works, the contact is Tracy Zeal on 08700 500792.

For further information, please contact Kent Highway Services, on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways

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Sparking revolution for the Chevy name

By **STEVE LOADER**

SPARK is a great name for Chevrolet's new baby car, sparking major changes in the way the American marque is perceived in the UK.

The Spark is not simply a new model, but a whole new name and philosophy that also severs a link with the past by replacing the increasingly tired-looking Matiz, launched as a Daewoo 12 years ago.

To be fair, with a clever five-door body credited to Italian motor style guru Giorgetto Giugiaro, the Matiz originally put some western city car designs to shame, but sales have relied increasingly on keen pricing and, latterly, the Government sponsored £2,000-a-time Scrappage scheme.

The car was not helped when Daewoo's troubled parent sold control of its car division to General Motors in 2001; as part of a re-brand as Chevrolet for the UK, the Matiz gained a facelift that made it look like it had been put on a burger and fries diet.

No such accusation could be made against the Spark.

Within compact city car dimensions, Chevy has created a crisply-drawn high roof five-door replacement with fashionably concealed rear door handles and bags of cabin space.

With dealers knocking out final Matiz stocks for as little as £4,995, it looks more expensive priced at £6,945, but the Spark is far more sophisticated than its predecessor and will come with more features.

Selling initially in five-door form only it will also sell with two petrol options – a 68PS (67bhp) 1.0-litre or 82PS (81bhp) 1.2-litre.

Standard kit includes air con, electric front windows and six airbags, which enabled the Spark to score an overall four out of five stars in the Euro NCAP crash test, with a maximum five stars for child protection.

Mid-range LS trim – expected to be the most popular – adds remote central locking, interior upgrades, front fog lamps and a body-coloured rear spoiler.

Then LS+ gets alloys, electric windows all-round, heated electric mirrors, roof bars and steering wheel audio controls, while the LT flagship adds 15-inch alloys, climate control, exterior body kit and six-speaker stereo.

The car is launched officially in March, but dealers are jockeying to unveil the car early.

Caffyns of Tunbridge Wells – officially one of the brand's top 15 dealers – is even staging a pre-launch event on February 15 for existing customers with a chance to drive the new Chevy baby a few days later.

General sales manager Andy Kitney said: "Advance interest has been such that we felt we just had to go as early as possible with introducing the car to customers."

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09 59 FOCUS 2-0 TITANIUM AUTO PAS ESTATE SEA GREY 100 MILES £16995
09 59 ZAFIRA 19 EXCLUSIVE DIESEL AUTO PAS BLACK MET DEL MILES £16995
09 09 ZAFIRA 19 EXCLUSIVE DIESEL AUTO PAS BLACK MET DEL MILES £15495
09 09 CHEVROLET LACETTI 1-6 SX AUTO PAS 5 DR SILVER 900 MILES £7995
09 09 MAZDA 3 TAKARA 1-6 AUTO PAS ALLOYS 5DR SILVER 7000 MILES £12495
09 09 ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C ESTATE SILVER 2000 MILES £9995
09 09 FORD C-MAX 2-0 ZETEC AUTO PAS 5DR AVALON BLUE 3000 MILES £13995
09 09 FUSION 1-6 ZETEC PLUS AUTO PAS 5DR AVALON BLUE 2000 MILES £10995
09 09 NEW FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC 5DRAUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE MET 3000 MILES £12995
09 09 MERIVA 1-6 LIFE AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C STAR SILVER 200 MILES £10995
09 09 NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5 DR AUTO PAS DENIM BLUE 4000 MILES £9995
09 09 CHEVROLET LACETTI EST 1-8 SX SW AUTO PAS 5 DR SILVER 3000M £7995
09 09 MECEDES A160 ELEGANCE AUTO PAS MET GOLD 750 MILES £15495
09 09 NEW CORSA 1-2 DESIGN AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DR GREEN 6000 MILES £10995
09 58 NISSAN MICRA ACTIVE LUXURY 3 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 1700 MILES £8995
08 58 NEW FOCUS 1-6 STYLE AUTO PAS AIR/C DEEP RED 3000 MILES £11995
08 58 MAZDA 3 TAKARA 1-5 AUTO PAS ALLOYS 5DR RED MET 5000 MILES £12495
08 58 MEGANE 1-6 EXPRESSION ESTATE AUTO PAS BLACK 600 MILES £9995
08 58 GRAND SCENIC 2-0 S DYNAMIQUE 5DR AUTO PAS GREY 7000 MILES £12995
08 58 CHEVROLET LACETTI EST 1-8 SX SW AUTO PAS 5 DR BLACK 4000M £7495
08 58 FORD FUSION 1-4 STYLE CLIMATE SILVER METALLIC 5000 MILES £9495
08 58 PEUGEOT 107 2-TRONIC 3DR AUTO PAS RED 1400 MILES £7995
08 58 PEUGEOT 107 2-TRONIC 3DR AUTO PAS RED 2000 MILES £7995
08 58 NEW CORSA 1-2 CLUB AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DR ICE BLUE 4000 MILES £8995
08 58 ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C ESTATE SILVER 7000 MILES £8995
08 58 CHEVROLET AVEO LT AUTO PAS AIR/C TURQUOISE 1000 MILES £7995
08 58 NISSAN NOTE ACENTA 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 1800 MILES £8995
08 58 NISSAN NOTE ACENTA 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 3000 MILES £8995
08 58 RENAULT CLIO 1-6 EXPRESSION 3DR AUTO PAS 750 MILES £9495
08 58 TOYOTA YARIS T3 AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DR BLUE 6000 MILES £9995
08 58 KANGOO AUTHENTIQUE 1-6 AUTO PAS AIR/C MET BLUE 8000 MILES £9995

COUPES & CONVERTIBLES

09 09 FORD FOCUS CC CONVERTIBLE AUTO PAS ALLOYS RED 4000 MILES £14995
08 58 PEUGEOT 207 SPORT CC 1-6 AUTO ALL BLACK LEATHER2000MILES £15995
08 58 MICRA 1-6 CONVERTIBLE CC ACENTA AUTO PAS LATTE 4000 MILES £11995
08 08 MICRA 1-6 CONVERTIBLE CC ACENTA AUTO PAS PACIFIC 2000 MILES £10995
08 57 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS FLAME 6000 MILES £13495
07 57 MICRA 1-6 CONVERTIBLE CC SPORT AUTO PAS INFERNO 7000 MILES £10995
07 57 MICRA 1-6 CONVERTIBLE CC SPORT AUTO PAS BLUE MET 5000MILES £10995
07 57 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 5000 MILES £13495
06 56 MICRA 1-6 SPORT CONVERT AUTO PAS ALLOYS BLUE 12000 MILES £9995
06 56 MICRA 1-6 ESSENSA CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 18000 MILES £9995
06 56 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS GREY 16000 MILES £10995
06 56 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 19000 MILES £10495
06 56 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS SILVER 23000 MILES £9995
06 56 MEGANE PRIVILEGE 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 14000 MILES £10995
06 06 MICRA 1-6 ESSENSA CONVERT AUTO PAS SILVER 28000 MILES £9995
06 06 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 21000 MILES £9995
06 06 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 10000 MILES £10495
05 05 MEGANE DYNAMIC 1-6 CONVERT AUTO PAS BLUE 38000 MILES £8495

FIAT

06 56 FIAT PANDA ELEGANZA 1242CC 5DR AUTO PAS BLACK 16000MILES £5995

FUSION & FIESTA

07 57 FIESTA STYLE 1-6 CLIMATE AUTO PASAIR/C BLUE 19000 MILES £7995
07 57 FIESTA STYLE 1-6 CLIMATE 3 DRAUTO PASAIR/C SILVER 1000 MILES £7495
07 57 FUSION ZETEC 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR BLUE 1000 MILES £8995
07 07 FUSION ZETEC 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR GREEN 4000 MILES £8495
06 56 FUSION ZETEC 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR BLUE 8000 MILES £7495
06 56 FIESTA STYLE 1-6 CLIMATE AUTO PASAIR/C BLUE 13000 MILES £6995
03 53 FUSION 2 1-4 AUTO PAS AIR BLACK 4600 MILES £3995

FORD FOCUS HATCHES & 4 DOORS

08 08 NEW FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC 5DRAUTO PAS AIR/C BLACK 4000 MILES £11495
08 57 NEW FOCUS 1-6 STYLE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 7000 MILES £10495
07 57 FOCUS 1-6 STYLE AUTO PAS AIR/C MOONDUST SILVER 7000 MILES £8995
07 57 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC 5DRAUTO PAS AIR/CALLOYS GREEN 5000 MILES £8995
07 57 FOCUS 16 ZETEC 3DRAUTO PAS AIR/C ALLOYS SEA GREY 13000 MILES £8995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PASAIR OCEAN BLUE 8000 MILES £7995
06 56 FORD FOCUS GHIA AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C SEA GREY 13000 MILES £7995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS TONIC BLUE 13000 MILES £7995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 17000 MILES £7995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS TANGO 18000 MILES £7995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 LX HATCH AUTO PAS AIR/C STRATOS SILVER 10000 MILES £6995
06 06 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS BLUE 12000 MILES £7495
06 06 FOCUS 1-6 GHIA AUTO PAS 4 DR ALLOYS SILVER 21000 MILES £7495
06 06 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE AUTO PAS AIR/C ESTATE TONIC16000MLS £7495
05 55 FORD FOCUS GHIA 1-6 AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C DENIM BLUE 28000 MILES £6995
03 03 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA AUTO 4 DOOR PAS AIR/C PEPPER RED 48000 MILES £4995
03 03 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA AUTO 5 DOOR PAS AIR/C BLACK LEATHER 58000MILES £4995

FORD FOCUS ESTATES

07 57 FOCUS 1-6 STYLE ESTATE AUTO AIR/C MOONDUST SILVER1900MILES £8995
07 07 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA 5 DR AUTO PAS SEA GREY AIR 17000 MILES £8995
06 56 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA ESTATE CAR AUTO PAS TONIC BLUE 23000 MILES £8995
06 56 FOCUS 2-0 GHIA ESTATE ESTATE PAS AIR/C TONIC BLUE 18000 MILES £8495
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 LX ESTATE AUTO PAS AIR/C STEEL GREY 12000 MILES £6995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 LX ESTATE AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 17000 MILES £6995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 LX ESTATE AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 17000 MILES £6995
06 56 FOCUS 1-6 LX ESTATE AUTO PAS AIR/C TANGO 21000 MILES £6995
06 06 FOCUS 1-6 ZETEC CLIMATE ESTATE AUTO PAS AIR ALLOYS 11000MLS £7495

MONDEO

06 56 MONDEO 2-0 GHIA AUTO PAS 5DR SILVER METALLIC 23000 MILES £9495
06 56 MONDEO 2-0 LX AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C SILVER METALLIC 24000 MILES £8495

CORSA

08 58 NEW CORSA 1-2 CLUB AUTO PAS AIR/C 3DR ICE BLUE 300 MILES £8995
07 57 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN 3 DR AUTO PAS BLUE 9000 MILES £9495
07 57 NEW CORSA 1-4 CLUB AUTO PAS AIR/C 3DR ULTRA BLUE15000 MILES £7995
07 07 NEW CORSA 1-4 SX AUTO PAS AIR/C 5DR BLUE 2000MILES £8995
07 56 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 9000 MILES £7995
07 56 CORSA 1-2 LIFE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 5000 MILES £7995
06 06 CORSA 1-4 ACTIVE 5 DR AIR/C AUTO PAS BLUE 16000 MILES £6995
06 06 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN 3 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 23000 MILES £6495
06 06 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 11000 MILES £6995
06 06 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN 3 DR AUTO PAS ULTRA BLUE 2000MILES £6995
06 06 CORSA 1-0 LIFE ECO AUTO PAS 5DR STAR SILVER 24000 MILES £5495
06 06 CORSA 1-0 LIFE ECO AUTO PAS 5DR STAR MAUVE 26000 MILES £5495
04 53 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN 3 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 14000MILES £4995
03 53 CORSA 1-4 DESIGN 3 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 14000MILES £4995

DAIHATSU

06 56 DAIHATSU SIRION SE 1-3 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 28000 MILES £5995
06 56 DAIHATSU SIRION SE 1-3 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 16000 MILES £5995
06 06 DAIHATSU CHARADE 1-0 5 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 12000 MILES £4995

CITROENS

08 08 CITROEN C3 1-6 SX AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C BLUE 8000 MILES £9995
08 08 CITROEN C3 1-6 SX AUTO PAS 5DR AIR/C BLUE 8000 MILES £9995
06 56 CITROEN PICASSO 2-0 EXCLUSIVE AUTO DIABLO 16000 MILES £8495

MAZDA

07 57 MAZDA 3 TS AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR/C 5DR SILVER 8000 MILES £10995
06 56 MAZDA 6 TS AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR/C 5DR SEA GREY 16000 MILES £9995
06 56 MAZDA 6 TS AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR/C 5DR MET BLUE 9000 MILES £9995
06 56 MAZDA 6 TS AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR/C 5DR SEA GREY 21000 MILES £9495

SUZUKI

07 57 GRAND VITARA 2-0 5DR AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE 8000 MILES £11995
06 06 SUZUKI IGNIS 1-5 GL 5 DR AUTO PAS CATS EYES BLUE 15000 MILES £5995
05 55 SUZUKI SWIFT 1-3 GLX 5DR AUTO PAS AIR GREY 16000 MILES £7495
02 51 SUZUKI GRAND VITARA 2-0 DIESEL AUTO PAS SILVER 50000 MILES £4995

KIA

06 56 KIA PICANTO 1-1 LX 5DR AUTO PAS AIR/CON 21000 MILES £5995
06 56 KIA PICANTO 1-1 LX 5DR AUTO PAS AIR/CON 10000 MILES £5995

HONDA

06 56 HONDA CRV SE AUTO PAS SILVER GREY AIR 10000 MILES £11995
04 54 HONDA ACCORD 2-0 EXECUTIVE AUTO ESTATE 26000 MILES £7995

HYUNDAI

08 08 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS MET GREY 5000 MILES £6995
07 57 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS MET BLUE 5000 MILES £6495
07 57 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS YELLOW 9000 MILES £5995
07 57 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS YELLOW 9000 MILES £5995
06 56 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1-6 GSi AUTO PAS 5DR SILVER GREEN 7000 MILES £6995
06 56 HYUNDAI MATRIX 1-6 GSi AUTO PAS 5DR SILVER GREEN 16000 MILES £6995
06 56 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS ELECTRIC BLUE 9000 MILES £5495
06 06 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS ELECTRIC BLUE 7000 MILES £5495
06 06 HYUNDAI AMICA 1-1 CDX 5 DR AUTO PAS BLUE 19000 MILES £5295

TOYOTA

08 08 TOYOTA YARIS T3 AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DR ALLOYS BLACK 8000 MILES £9495
07 57 YARIS 1-3 ZINC 3 DR AUTO PAS ALLOYS BLACK UNDER 800 MILES £8995
07 57 AYGO 1-0 PLUS 3DR AUTO PAS SILVER 2000 MILES £7495
06 56 COROLLA 1-6 T3 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C MET SILVER 6000 MILES £9995
06 06 TOYOTA YARIS VERSO 1-3 T3 AUTO PAS SILVER 6000 MILES £8495
05 05 TOYOTA YARIS 1-0 T SPIRIT AUTO PAS ICE BLUE 17000 MILES £6695
04 04 COROLLA 1-6 T SPIRIT 3 5 DR AUTO AIR/C MET SILVER 24000 MILES £6995
02 02 TOYOTA YARIS VERSO 1-3 GLS AUTO PAS SILVER 22000 MILES £5995

NISSAN

08 08 NISSAN MICRA TEKNA 5 DR AUTO PAS INFERNO RED 9000 MILES £9495
08 08 NISSAN MICRA ACENTA 5 DR AUTO PAS BLADE SILVER 10000 MILES £8495
08 08 NISSAN MICRA ACENTA + 5 DR AUTO PAS CAFFE LATTE 4000 MILES £8995
08 08 NISSAN NOTE ACENTA R 5 DR AUTO PAS BLACK MET 2000 MILES £9995
07 57 NISSAN NOTE ACENTA 5 DR AUTO PAS CAFFE LATTE 4000 MILES £8995
06 56 NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA 5 DR AUTO PAS PACIFIC BLUE 5000 MILES £7495
06 56 NISSAN MICRA INITIA 1-2 3 DR AUTO PAS BLADE SILVER 27000 MILES £5995
06 56 NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA 5 DR AUTO PAS PACIFIC BLUE 7000 MILES £7495
06 56 NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA 5 DR AUTO PAS PACIFIC BLUE 11000 MILES £7495
06 56 NISSAN MICRA SVE 3 DR AUTO PAS INFERNO RED 23000 MILES £6995
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FIRST GEAR

Compiled by Steve Loader

Insight hybrid is more affordable than rivals

HONDA has confirmed its Insight as the most affordable hybrid on the market with a brand new PCP (personal contract purchase) offer.

Customers can now get an Insight SE for just £199 per month (36 payments of £199 at 5.9 per cent APR with a deposit of £4,625.50) against key rivals quoted by Honda: the Focus ECOnetic (£349.98/month) diesel and the hybrid sector leader, the Toyota Prius (£265.38).

The Insight SE is also priced at £16,338 – undercutting the Prius by £3,165 – and comes with alloys, climate control, electric folding mirrors, steering wheel-mounted audio controls and vehicle stability assist.

Bye to Grande Punto – hi to the Punto Evo

AS PART of a major facelift – and one that really does change its face – Fiat's supermini has had a name change.

'Grande' Punto has given way to Punto 'Evo' (from £10,995), highlighting evolution through new lower emission and consumption engines with start/stop as standard and enhanced safety.

And there's a twist to Fiat's innovative Blue and Me controls – most models can now be specified with a customised finger-tip control TomTom sat nav. The Punto Evo also gets fully-integrated Fiat eco:Drive to help owners drive 'greener'.

Though not an entirely new car, Fiat's so-called 'Ecotechnology' engine line-ups – the MultiAir petrol family and MultiJet II diesels – take it close to being one. All five units conform to the latest stringent Euro 5 emissions requirements as well as qualifying for low road tax.

And fitting a start/stop system, killing the engine at the lights or in stuttering traffic and automatically re-starting when the driver makes to drive off, is unprecedented.

But the Italian brand cannot quite give up on driver entertainment so there are two chassis set-ups – Sporting (three-door only) and Comfort (three and five-door).

Wind blows in this summer

NOBODY could ever accuse Renault of cowardice in the face of marketing, but is the French marque risking too much by using Wind as the name for its new Vauxhall Tigra rival?

To make matters worse the baby crop top does look a lot like a slightly constipated Lotus Elise rather than the crisply-styled Tigra.

But the Wind is clearly not aimed at the 'boys' market for convertibles, so Renault's position as the epitome of French motoring chic should blow any doubts away with prospective female customers, when the car comes to market this summer.

by STEVELOADER

High hopes of new gold strike for Auris

TOYOTA hasn't exactly struck the gold implied by the name of its Ford Focus challenger, the Auris.

Perhaps punters tumbled that it was really just a name change for the ultra-reliable Corolla; the latter may have helped make Toyota the world's number one carmaker, but it scored zero for personality and so gave way in the UK to the Auris in 2007.

Three years on though and not much has changed, so the Auris has had a shake-up.

Along with a 'Made in the UK' label – it is produced at Toyota's Derbyshire plant – the three and five-door line-up (from £14,463) now has sharper lines, handling and ride, says Toyota.

Work on the last is a direct result of customer feedback and, possibly, whinging motor writers like this one. The work should be most noticeable on T2 and TR models.

The speed-sensitive Electric Power Steering (EPS) has also been refined for better feedback and vehicle agility.

All of this will better support a sportier new look. The front end has a new deep bumper with integrated fog lamps for upmarket TR and SR models, swept-back headlamps, plus a new bonnet and a grille.

The makeover continues inside where less hard plastic and a smarter dashboard are the changes to note, while the new motoring 'must have' iPod/MP3 USB port/aux-in socket also makes its debut.

So much for getting buyers to look again at the Auris; once they are paying attention, the real benefits are more obvious for the car also now gains Toyota Optimal Drive powertrain technology that has revolutionised other models in the brand line-up, notably the Yaris supermini.

More than just marketing gloss, Optimal Drive brings the seemingly contradictory benefits of more power with improved fuel efficiency and CO2 emission levels.

ECO-FRIENDLY: Toyota took an environmental lead in 2009, with its war on car emissions

The most frugal model in the petrol line-up, the 1.33-litre with stop/start should average nearly 50mpg and emits just 135g/km of CO2, while the 1.4-litre diesel can average at least 60mpg yet emit 125g/km.

The brand's 'war on emissions' has helped it top of a new 'green league' that will become increasingly important as the global warming debate heats up.

The league is compiled by independent industry analysts at Clean Green Cars, using a sales-weighted calculation (the CO2 output of each model multiplied by the number of those models sold in 2009) to produce the rankings by brand.

Toyota showed one of the highest improvements over 2008, despite a line-up that still includes 4x4s and SUVs such as the Land Cruiser and RAV4.

Not surprisingly, the brand claims that its Optimal Drive technology has been a key reason for its green halo though its hybrid star, the Prius, is another contributing factor.

The Prius will also soon be joined by a UK-built hybrid version of the Auris, further

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Discount price of £4795 relates to Matiz 0.8 S 5dr model only (for Aveo 1.2 S 3dr £5995). Vehicles shown feature metallic paint available at extra cost (Matiz £335, Aveo £365). 3 years/30,000 miles full service package at an optional cost of £259. The savings are against current MRP and available on UK supplied vehicles ordered before 28th February, 2010 and registered before 28th June, 2010. Prices correct at time of going to press. At participating retailers only. Extra savings provided by Chevrolet UK Ltd only. Cannot be used with any other offer and are subject to status, eligibility, terms and conditions. Available to private individuals and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only). All other Sales categories are excluded. Offer ends 28th February, 2010. Excludes Isle of Man and Channel Islands. £2,000 Government Scrappage Allowance is dependent on the vehicle meeting the full Government Scrappage incentive criteria when traded in against a new car subject to conditions and whilst Government funding applies. The Government Scrappage payment applies to vehicles registered on or before 29th February 2000. Prize Draw: 1.Participants must be resident in the UK aged 18 years. 2. No purchase is necessary and entry to the free prize draw is open to UK residents. To enter bring a copy of this advert and you will automatically be entered in to the free prize draw to win Protection and Travel Pack. Entries to the prize draw are only valid if completed in full using the official entry form. Photocopies are not acceptable. Damaged, defaced, incomplete or illegible entries will be disqualified and will not be returned. Completed entries must be handed to FG Barnes Limited, Sutton Road, Parkwood Estate, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9FB. 3. No responsibility shall be accepted by the Promoter for lost, mutilated, incomplete or missing entries, although FG Barnes Limited will take all reasonable care to forward all eligible entries for the draw. All entries received by the Promoter become the property of the Promoter, and will not be returned. 4. The Closing Date for all entries to the free prize draw is 1800 hours 28th March 2010 (the "Closing Date"). 5. The Prize Draw will take place on 29th March 2010 and the winner will be drawn at random by an independent adjudicator. The adjudicators' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into by the Promoter. Full terms and conditions can be obtained from FG Barnes Maidstone.

Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km). Aveo 1.2 S 3dr: Urban - 39.2 (7.2), Extra-urban - 61.4 (4.6), Combined - 51.4 (5.5). CO_2 emissions 132g/km. Matiz 0.8 S 5dr: Urban - 43.5(6.5), Extra-urban - 68.9 (4.1), Combined - 56.5 (5.0). CO_2 emissions 119g/km.

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Model shown is the Ibiza 5dr 1.4 Sport with optional metallic paint (£380 RRP). Offer applies to Ibiza 5dr 1.4 Sport only sold and registered between 1st January 2010 and 31st March 2010. Retail Sales only. The typical 0% APR offer is not available in conjunction with the Government Scrappage scheme or the SEAT customer loyalty offer. Subject to vehicle availability. Indemnities may be required. Subject to status. Available to over 18s only from participating dealers. SEAT Finance, Freepost SEAT Finance. Offer may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Prices quoted and example shown is correct at time of going to print and reflects 17.5% VAT.

Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Ibiza 5dr range in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 33.6 (8.4) - 57.6 (4.9); extra-urban 56.5 (5.0) - 94.2 (3.0); combined 44.8 (6.3) - 76.3 (3.7). CO_2 emissions 98 - 149 g/km.

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2002 52 CITROEN C3 1.4 SX AUTO, 5dr, 2 owners, A/C, 66k
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£6,995

2002 52 ROVER 25 1.6 IL AUTO 5dr, 1 Owner, A/C, 33k
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£6,495

2006 06 RENUALT CLIO 1.4 DYNAMIQUE, 5dr, A/C, alloys, 33k
REDUCED £5,995

2001 51 RENAULT SCENIC 1.6 EXPRESSION AUTO, 5dr, a/c, 33k
£2,495

2006 56 TOYOTA YARIS 1.0 T3 5dr, 1 owner, A/C, 14k
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2006 56 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.3 LIFE T/DIESEL, 5dr, 1 owner, air con, 23k
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Volvo miser proves real

DrivingReview

by STEVE LOADER
CHIEF DRIVING CORRESPONDENT
steve.loader@kosmedia.co.uk

Volvo S40

REMEMBER the old days of 'bangernomics' and how your heart seemed to stop whenever the car did – closely followed by the engine?

How your chronologically-challenged jalopy never could quite stay running, no matter how much you threatened it in the finest tradition of John Cleese in Fawlty Towers?

It was part and parcel of running an older car though; you saved your wallet upfront by buying a banger, then paid extra in stress and when you had that inevitable head-shaking encounter with the garage mechanic.

But a new generation of motorists will grow up with a rather more relaxed view of the phenomenon if cars like the Volvo S40 1.6 diesel DRIVe Start/Stop (from £18,445) become the norm. DRIVe is Volvo's take on the eco sub-branding spreading across the industry: VW has BlueMotion, Ford has ECOnetic, Vauxhall the ecoFLEX and Bentley has GuzzleLess – yeah, I lied about the last one.

But I'm not fibbing when I say that Volvo has a good handle on this green lark, even if it's just what you expect from the conscientious Swedish marque, which claims to have been environmentally aware since the 1970s, though I struggle with this when I recall the thirsty 700/900 Series turret-less tanks it sold over the two decades after that.

Be that as it may, DRIVe brings a now familiar parcel of economy and low emission tricks such as better aerodynamics and tweaked powertrains and Volvo says it has even cut energy used in production and recycling of its cars.

For an extra £250 on the S40 line-up you can also specify the Swedes' Start/Stop system, as on the test car. This cuts the engine at the lights or when making slow progress in traffic and then smoothly fires it up as the driver makes to move off again.

No thought is required and certainly no "sound thrashing" from Mr Fawlty.

However, the feature can be switched off – you might not want to lose the heater too in the cold conditions we have endured lately.

Official figures show Start/Stop can save as much as 10mpg in average fuel use above the

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standard DRIVe equivalent, which already delivers an impressive 62.8.

Unlike some, Volvo does not now bother with a 'standard' 1.6 diesel, which is a) as things should be when maker and customer ought to be prioritising eco cars and b) stops me highlighting how much more buyers are charged for a 'greener' model against the standard car.

Start/Stop knocks emissions back from 119g/km of CO2 to 104, but this does nothing directly for the company car tax bill or annual road tax of £35/year, even if it does polish your halo. Nevertheless, it would pay for itself soon in fuel savings and fits well with an overall eco package that makes the DRIVe a driving pleasure rather than a hair shirt option.

It even looks good, with Volvo's now distinctive scalloped rear wings and smoothed alloys that further aid aerodynamics.

Like the closely related C30 equivalent I drove shortly after Volvo launched DRIVe last summer, the S40's inherently sporty chassis – borrowed from the Ford Focus – is barely affected by the DRIVe engine revisions and low-rolling resistance tyres. The well-mannered 108bhp diesel is more than adequate to deliver decent performance, should you wish to ignore this model's primary aim to be as economical as possible.

On top of this, you get the understated functionality and quality of the S40 range itself; the interior is smart and was the first model to introduce Volvo's 'flying centre console' feature, which allows extra stowage behind the controls.

DrivingPortfolio

VOLVO S40 1.6D SE START/STOP £19,795

Driving appeal	★★★★
Image	★★★★
Space	★★★★
Value	★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★
How green?	★★★★★
Road tax	£35/year
Best rival	VW Golf BlueMotion

TheVerdict

DON'T LIKE: I cannot criticise a car that does its 'greenest' best to please

NOT SURE: this S40 has big 'executive' appeal to match its eco recommendations

REALLY LIKE: how the eco credentials do not impact on everyday practicality

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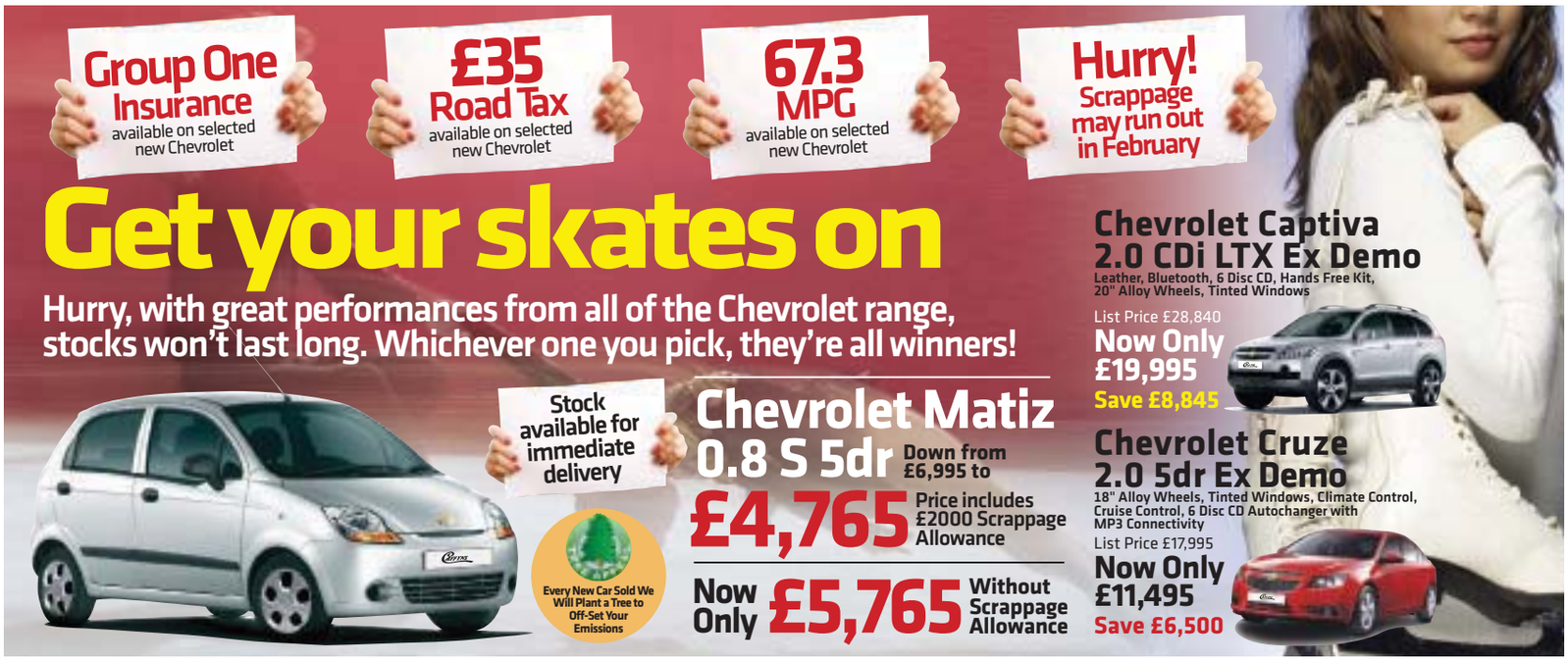

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Motability

Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km). Matiz 0.8 S 5dr: Urban - 43.5 (6.5), Extra-urban - 68.9 (4.1), Combined - 56.5 (5.0). CO2 emissions 119g/km.
Vehicle shown features mica paint available at extra cost of £325. 3 years/30,000 miles full service package at an optional cost of £249. Available at participating retailers only. Not available in conjunction with any other offers. Savings against current man. rec. price and available on UK supplied vehicles ordered and registered before 31st January 2010. Prices correct at time of press. (Chev79242). Scrappage Allowance subject to eligibility, please ask for terms and conditions.

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*Saving shown is against Vauxhall list price at time of publication. On the road prices include customer savings, number plates, delivery, Vehicle Excise Duty and a first registration fee. All prices exclude VAT. Models shown are for illustration purposes only. Offers are available on orders placed before 7th February 2010, subject to availability, and are available to small businesses 1-24 units only (purchase only). All other sales categories are excluded. Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer and may not apply to all retailer stocks. UK-supplied vehicles only. A £59 inc. VAT admin fee will be added to all vehicle purchases, this includes £20 worth of fuel. Telephone calls may be recorded for training purposes. E&OE.

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59 Reg Corsa Active 1.2i 16v 3dr
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(1) Typical finance example for 4 years 0% APR Typical.

CASH PRICE	DEPOSIT	AMOUNT FINANCED	FIRST PAYMENT	46 MONTHLY PAYMENTS	1 FINAL PAYMENT	INTEREST CHARGES	TOTAL CHARGE FOR CREDIT	TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	0% TYPICAL APR†
£7995	£3198	£4797	£99.94	£99.94	£99.94	NIL	NIL	£7995	

3 YEARS 0% APR ON THE FOLLOWING VEHICLES!*(2)

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All models include balance of manufacturers warranty, many with metallic paint!

(2) Typical finance example for 3 years 0% APR Typical.

CASH PRICE	DEPOSIT	AMOUNT FINANCED	FIRST PAYMENT	34 MONTHLY PAYMENTS	1 FINAL PAYMENT	INTEREST CHARGES	TOTAL CHARGE FOR CREDIT	TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE	0% TYPICAL APR†
£10495	£4198	£6297	£174.92	£174.92	£174.92	NIL	NIL	£10495	

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VAUXHALL

(1) 4 years 0% APR is based on a minimum deposit of 40%, available on selected Agila and Corsa models as advertised, minimum finance amount £5000, minimum finance term 24 months. †Finance subject to status, over 18's only a guarantee may be required, written quotations available on request. Savings shown are against MRRP at time of publication. Prices shown are available on selected WJ King stock vehicles only, whilst stocks last and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. All offers available to private individuals. Offers apply to selected pre-registered vehicles purchased before 28th February. A £99 inc. VAT admin fee will be added to all vehicle purchases, this includes £20 worth of fuel. WJ King reserves the right to withdraw any offer at any time. Please note, models portrayed are for illustration purposes only and may not represent actual model. Telephone calls may be recorded for training purposes. E&OE.

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2004 SAAB 9-3 1.9TiD Linear , 4 Doors, Manual, Diesel, 50,000 miles, Metallic Steel Grey. ABS, Air conditioning, Alarm, Alloy wheels, Cloth seat trim, Full Electric Pack, Full Service History, Park distance control, Traction control..... ..... **£7,395**

2005 05 SAAB 9-3 1.8T Linear Sport , 4 Doors, Automatic, Saloon, Petrol, 63,277 miles, Metallic Grey, 2 Owners. Cruise control, Alloy wheels, Immobiliser, Multi function steering wheel, ABS, Cloth seat trim, Full Electric Pack, Reverse parking aid, Part Service History, Air conditioning, Climate Control, Park distance control..... **£7,195**

2002 52 SAAB 9-5 2.3HOT Aero , 4 Doors, Manual, Saloon, Petrol, 73,000 miles, Steel Grey. ABS, Alloy wheels, Full Electric Pack, Cruise control, Park distance control, Sports seats, Traction control, Climate control, In Car Entertainment, Warranty, Leather upholstery, Metallic paintwork, Tinted glass. **£5,495**

2001 Y SAAB 9-3 2.2 TiD SE , 5 Doors, Manual, Hatchback, Diesel, 122,000 miles, Metallic blue, 2 Owners. Rear wiper, ABS, Air conditioning, Heated door mirrors, Alloy wheels, Cruise control, Folding rear seats, Immobiliser, Radio/CD, Rear headrests, Steering wheel reach adjustment, Front electric windows, Electric door mirrors, Rear electric windows, Audio remote control, Front head restraints, Front fog lights, Central locking, Passenger airbag, Remote central locking, Foglights, Drivers airbag, Trip computer, Full Service History, Alarm, Climate Control, Cloth upholstery, Headlight washers, Body coloured bumpers, Rear armrest, PAS, Child locks, Service indicator. Insurance Group: 12..... **£3,195**

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Total Amount Payable	Total Charge for Credit inc Purchase fee	Optional Final Payment	4.9% APR Typical	
£9326.48	£481.48	£3854		

Mileage based on 12,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charged at 0.06p+VAT per mile

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Cash Price	Customer Deposit	Deposit Contribution from Ford	Total Deposit	24 Monthly Payments
£11995	£3167	£450	£3617	£149.03
Total Amount Payable	Total Charge for Credit inc Purchase fee	Optional Final Payment	4.9% APR	
£12684.72	£689.72	£5481		

Mileage based on 12,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charged at 0.06p+VAT per mile

Brand New Ford Mondeo Titanium 2.2 TDCi 5dr

Cash Price	Customer Deposit	Deposit Contribution from Ford	Total Deposit	24 Monthly Payments
£18995	£5071	£1000	£6071	£249.01
Total Amount Payable	Total Charge for Credit inc Purchase fee	Optional Final Payment	4.9% APR	
£20030.24	£1035.24	£7973		

Mileage based on 12,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charged at 0.08p+VAT per mile

Brand New Ford Focus Zetec 1.8 5dr

Cash Price	Customer Deposit	Deposit Contribution from Ford	Total Deposit	24 Monthly Payments
£15395	£3713	£1500	£5213	£219.04
Total Amount Payable	Total Charge for Credit inc Purchase fee	Optional Final Payment	4.9% APR	
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www.carsforkent.co.uk

The new '10-Plate makes sense

COMMENT

By **STEVE LOADER**

BRITAIN has limped out of recession, so the brakes should now be off buying a new '10 registration plate

Assailed by falling demand and over-capacity, carmakers and dealers have been desperate to move metal with discounts, leases and finance packages to tempt even the gloomiest recession watcher.

Those lucky enough to have savings may also check the paltry interest earned and think it's a good time to use that capital to help the motoring budget, either by downsizing or buying a more economical and eco-friendly/low road tax model – sales of city cars and superminis are booming.

And the two-grand windfall under the Government-sponsored Scrappage scheme might be ending, but many carmakers are replacing it with similar offers rather than bothering with inflated list prices that most people haggle down anyway.

The appeal of buying new has been enhanced by narrowing options on the used market, where prices have become ridiculous at a time when hard cash is tight.

Year-old examples such as ex-fleeters and dealer demonstrators shot up 25 per cent in value last year, while the three-year/average mileage examples that are dealers' mainstay stock are in short supply as dealer forecourts and private buyers drive up prices at auction.

The rise in used values has been caused by consumers and fleets backing off buying new cars at the first sign of the recession, which knocked on to choke used supplies further down the line.

With the '10-Plate upon us, surely some used car buyers will see the sense in buying a new motor and cheering themselves up too?

Skoda keeps deals rolling for new reg

SKODA has extended its 'No-VAT' offer across all Octavia, Fabia and Roomster models, with a potential saving of up to £3,388.

Instead of closing at the end of January, this deal continues to apply to orders up to March 31.

It means the popular Fabia supermini still costs from just £7,870 – saving up to £2,100 and including the eco-friendly Greenline (pictured) – while the multi-award winning Octavia range that played such a major role in the Czech marque's revival is available from just £10,526.

Buyers who choose the Skoda Superb (main picture) – Top Gear Magazine's 'Luxury Car of the Year' – will benefit from three years or 30,000 miles free servicing.

In addition, low-rate finance through Skoda's Solutions is available across the range, including the recently introduced Yeti crossover, available with front-wheel drive or 4x4.

At just 7.9 per cent APR, Skoda Finance offers rates lower than the average high street bank rates.

And the brand says there is a Skoda Solution for everyone: customers can choose between part-exchanging their car for a new Skoda, making an optional final payment to purchase their new car, or simply returning it at the end of the contract.

All of the these deals top a great year for Skoda, which increased UK market share in 2009 to nearly two per cent, helped by the all-new Superb and Yeti and the VW-owned brand's consistent reputation for customer satisfaction – it won the highly-respected Auto Express Driver Power awards 2009 for Customer Satisfaction and Best Manufacturer.

New 10 plate offers at Sherlodge

Octavia Fabia or Roomster.

No VAT. Ends 31st March. Don't miss out. Plus fantastic low rate deals from Skoda Finance.

We've reduced the prices of all Fabia and Octavia until 31st March 2010, which means it's like not having to pay the VAT. That's a saving of up to £2,110.43† on a Fabia and £3,388.30† on an Octavia.

0% hire purchase available on:

Fabia 3 and Scout, Roomster Scout, Octavia 4x4, Scout, L&K and vRS

Fabia from £225.25 per month
Roomster from £242.44 per month
Octavia from £330.56 per month

Examples based on minimum 50% deposit and balance payable over 24 months Typical 0% APR Finance subject to status. Indemnities may be required. Available to over 18's.

LOW RATE 'PCP' available on:

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Fabia from £87.51
Roomster from £121.24
Octavia from £139.55
Superb from £222.78
Yeti from £173.06

Examples based on a maximum 30% deposit balance payable over 42 months and 10,000 miles per annum. Final rental and admin fees apply Typical 7.9% APR Finance subject to status. Indemnities may be required. Available to over 18's

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Offer available on all Fabia and Octavia models ordered before 31st March 2010 at participating retailers only. Reduction applied to the RRP including factory fitted optional extras and is equivalent of the VAT applicable at the time. VAT is applicable and will be shown on the customer's invoice. †Savings shown relate to RRP's of the Fabia Scout 1.9 TDI PD 105bhp and the Octavia L&K estate 2.0 TDI PD 140bhp DSG. Excludes the channel islands. Prices are accurate at time of print. Offer is not available in conjunction with the Government's scrappage scheme.

Official fuel consumption in mpg for the Škoda range: Urban 19.2 (14.7) – 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 38.2 (7.4) – 83.1 (3.4), Combined 28.0 (10.1) – 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 emissions (g/km) Škoda Range: 109 – 235

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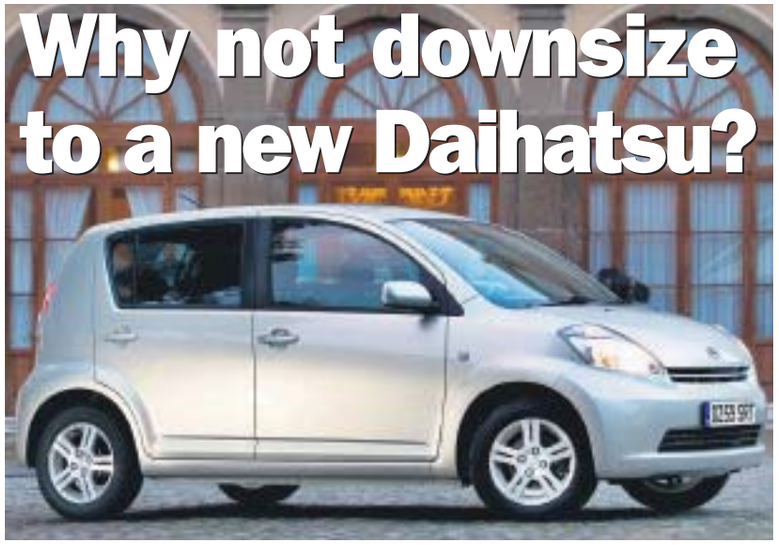
Motability

Why not downsize to a new Daihatsu?



ASKING yourself whether to downsize? Daihatsu might have the answer.

The Japanese marque has long specialised at the smaller end of the market and its five-door Sirion supermini offers clever space packaging with a high roof body and good standard specification, yet prices start at just £8,499.

Daihatsu does not bother with diesel engines, preferring to supply a range of petrol units that all offer decent economy for their output, ranging from an ultra-economical 1.0-litre – capable of averaging more than 60mpg – to a lively 1.5-litre that should still average in the mid-40s.

But Daihatsu does not just offer downsizing in this mainstream sector; it also has 'mini' options in the sporting, mini-MPV and 4x4/SUV segments of the market.

For its tiny size, the two-seat Copen packs a lot of specification including an electric folding hardtop, and all for just £11,997.

Perhaps the most arresting visually is the retro-styled Materia mini-MPV; compact on the outside with overtones of American hot rods of the 50s and 60s, the Materia is huge inside and a stylish alternative to conventional MPV boxes. Pricing for the single high-spec model is also attractive at £11,004.

Finally, Daihatsu offers its diminutive and affordable alternative to big and thirsty 4x4s, the Terios (from £12,997).

By virtue of its light weight and relatively powerful 1.5-litre petrol engine this can also perform well off-road, as shown by Top Gear's now legendary 'Fox Hunt' with the Terios cast as the fox trying to outwit a real pack of foxhounds.

Happy 20th birthday to Mazda's iconic soft-top

MAZDA is celebrating two decades of global success with a 20th Anniversary Limited Edition Mazda MX-5.

Just 2,000 will be sold across the UK and Europe, each wearing a special edition scuff plate in stainless steel with a unique serial number (from 1 to 2000).

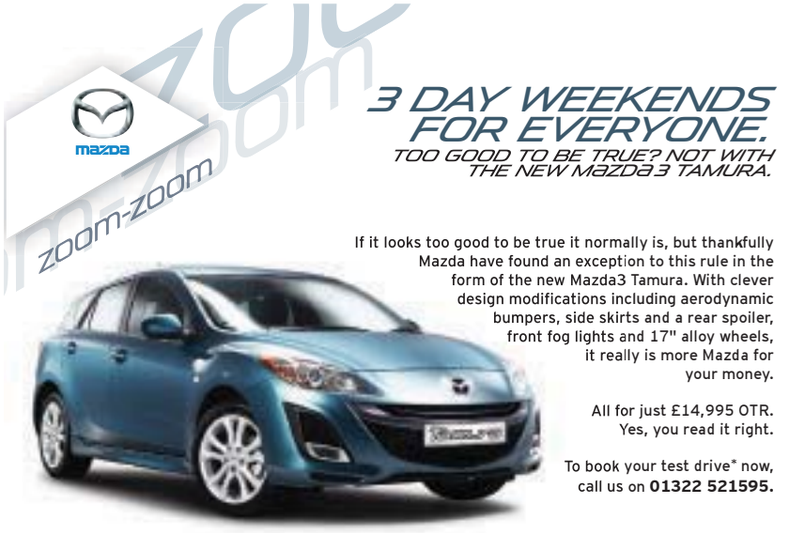
Based on the 1.8-litre SE soft-top roadster, this version has a special exterior styling package with chrome grille, door handles and headlight fascia along with silvered fog lamp surrounds and unique 17-inch alloys.

Prices for this desirable version of the third-generation 'MX' are to be announced, but the current range starts at £16,795 for the classic soft-top model and £18,795 for the ingenious folding hardtop roadster coupe version.

The 'Zoom Zoom' Japanese brand has also unveiled an all-new version of its sporty Mazda5 MPV (currently from £17,150) known for its sliding rear doors, and now including a new direct-injection, low-emission 2.0-litre petrol engine with start/stop feature.

The hatchback or estate Mazda6 family/company car star (currently from £16,115) has had a facelift, but the brand is also enjoying big success with its sharply styled three- and five-door Mazda2 (from £9,550) supermini and the recently-launched Mazda3 (from £13,930) – a distinctive and stylish alternative to the ubiquitous Ford Focus that includes the stunning MPS hot-hatch version.

Mazda has worked hard to marry lighter design with more economical low-emission petrol and diesel engines, while staying true to its driver-pleasing Zoom Zoom spirit exemplified by the evergreen MX-5 and the innovative RX-8 (£24,995) rotary-engine four-door coupe.



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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda3 range: Urban 21.4 (13.2) – 48.7 (5.8), Extra Urban 37.7 (7.5) – 74.3 (3.8), Combined 29.4 (9.6) – 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 emissions (g/km) 224 – 119.

Retail sales only. Subject to availability at participating Mazda dealers for new vehicles contracted and registered between 1 January 2010 and 31 March 2010. ^0% finance available on Mazda3 Tamura with minimum 50% deposit required°. A lower deposit will increase the amount of re-payments. Offer not available in conjunction with Government Scrappage Scheme. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantees/Indemnities may be required. Mazda Financial Service RH1 1SR. Model shown: Mazda3 Tamura. OTR price £14,995. On the road price includes 17.5% VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, 1st registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. Details correct at time of going to print. *Test drives subject to applicant status and availability.

Vauxhall eco Astra is quick to market

VAUXHALL did not waste any time bringing its most miserly version of the all-new sixth generation Astra to market.

Just weeks after the classy five-door hatch arrived in showrooms (from £15,736) proudly wearing a 'made in Britain' label, the ecoFLEX version can be ordered, priced from £17,920.

For the company car driver though, the figures that matter are a 12.1 per cent improvement in emissions over the conventional 1.7-litre diesel model, road tax at £35 and 13 per cent less benefit in kind taxation.

Like Vauxhall's other environment and pocket-friendly ecoFLEX versions of popular models, the Astra 'greenie' uses a combination of re-mapped powertrain and improved aerodynamics, without major changes to the positive driving experience.

The new Astra narrowly missed out on the current European Car of the Year title, a win that would have followed up on an outright victory for Vauxhall's big and stylish Insignia saloon/hatchback/estate range (from £18,070) – last year's replacement for the long-running Vectra company car contender.

The UK arm of General Motors is also playing to design strengths elsewhere, with the Corsa three/five-door hatchback (from £10,507) one of Britain's top three favourite cars, while the cleverly-packaged seven-seats-as-standard Zafira continues to lead the midi-MPV sector.

Vauxhall also offers the Meriva mini-MPV – officially priced from £13,738 though replacement later this year suggests there will be keen deals around – and the clever Agila supermini-MPV (from £8,473).

The griffin-badge brand also has a stylish contender in the 4x4/SUV sector, the Antara – deceptively luxurious and priced from £21,956.

Renault halo highlighted by hat-trick

RENAULT appears to have cornered the market in sporting halo models.

Not content with hot Renaultsport versions of its Twingo, Clio and Mégane hatchbacks, it has also revived the historic Gordini name and its distinctive blue with white stripes livery.

It all helped the French marque to an unprecented hat-trick in the 'Best Hot Hatch' category at the prestigious What Car? magazine awards.

The Twingo Renaultsport 133 Cup small hatchback won the under £15,000 category, the Clio Renaultsport 200 Cup won the £15,000-20,000 section and the new Mégane Renaultsport 250 won the £20,000-plus group.

To top it all, the Mégane was also crowned overall 'Hot Hatch of the Year 2010'.

But the self-styled 'Createur d'Automobiles' is not just about sporting models; it has also led in supermini design and single-handedly created the people carrier sector.

The three/five-door Clio (from £10,709) range took over from the legendary Renault 5 and now delivers a level of ride comfort and cabin space combined with French chic that has made it a UK best seller.

It also now has a baby brother in the three-door Twingo (from £7,552) contesting the city car sector.

Renault contests the traditional company car sector with the Laguna hatchback and estate (from £18,075) but is probably better known for MPVs, having launched the sector with the original 1980s-vintage Espace.

This continues with a modern successor (from £20,730), but Renault sells more of its smaller Scenic sister range (from £14,703) – itself a pioneer of the compact or midi-MPV sector.

Our latest '10 plate offers. (Opportunity on a plate.)

Fox from £7,460.

Fox 1.2 55PS 3-year, 10,000 miles per annum Solutions example.

34 monthly payments of	£99.00	Amount of credit	£5,392.29
Deposit	£2,067.71	Total amount payable	£8,413.71
Acceptance fee*	£125.00	Option to purchase fee†	£60.00
Optional final payment	£2,795.00	Excess mileage (per mile)	4.23p
Retail cash price	£7,460.00		7.9% APR

New Polo from £9,910.

Polo S 1.2 60PS 3-door, 3-year, 10,000 miles per annum Solutions example.

34 monthly payments of	£109.00	Amount of credit	£7,019.00
Deposit	£2,891.00	Total amount payable	£11,241.00
Acceptance fee*	£125.00	Option to purchase fee†	£60.00
Optional final payment	£4,459.00	Excess mileage (per mile)	4.23p
Retail cash price	£9,910.00		7.9% APR

Golf S from £14,850.

Golf S 1.4 80PS 3-door, 3-year, 10,000 miles per annum Solutions example.

35 monthly payments of	£189.00	Amount of credit	£10,666.00
Deposit	£4,184.00	Total amount payable	£16,759.00
Acceptance fee**	£125.00	Option to purchase fee†	£60.00
Optional final payment	£5,900.00	Excess mileage (per mile)	5.64p
Retail cash price	£14,850.00		7.9% APR

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*Payable as first payment. †Payable with optional final payment. **Payable within first payment. Further charges may be payable if vehicle is returned. Retail sales only. Indemnities may be required. Subject to status. Available for registrations before March 31st, 2010. Volkswagen Finance, Freepost VWFS. Offer maybe varied or withdrawn at anytime.

Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the Volkswagen range: urban 60.1 (4.7) – 13.3 (21.2); extra urban 83.1 (3.4) – 26.9 (10.5); combined 74.3 (3.8) – 19.5 (14.5).

CO_2 emissions 99 – 348g/km.

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Models featured: (1) Hyundai i10 Classic 1.2 at £5,695 in Electric Red Solid Paint at no extra cost. Price includes a customer saving of £2,065. (2) Hyundai i20 Classic 1.2 3 dr at £6,995 in Electric Red Solid Paint at no extra cost. Price includes a customer saving of £2,345. (3) Hyundai i30 Classic 1.4 at £7,995 in Shine Red Solid Paint at no extra cost. Price includes a customer saving of £4,005. ***Prices shown are for Government Scrappage Scheme customers only, while Scheme lasts (until Government funding exhausted or 28 February 2010 if earlier)** and are On The Road (OTR) and reflect customer savings against the manufacturer's recommended OTR price at the time of publication. For full details please refer to http://www.hyundai.co.uk/newCars/i10/prices, http://www.hyundai.co.uk/newCars/i20/prices, http://www.hyundai.co.uk/newCars/i30/prices or Hyundai's January 2010 Price Guide, reference 01/10 HB2/29. On the road prices include VAT where applicable, delivery, vehicle first registration fee, number plates and 12 months' road fund licence. These savings are only available to eligible customers who trade in a qualifying passenger car (M1) first registered in the UK on or before 29th February 2000 or a qualifying Light Commercial Vehicle not exceeding 3.5 tonnes (N1) first registered in the UK on or before 28th February 2002 against the purchase of a new Hyundai at a participating authorised UK Hyundai dealer during the Scheme period. Eligibility is subject to compliance with all requirements under the Government's Scrappage Scheme. Visit www.hyundai.co.uk for full details and applicable terms and conditions or see your local participating dealer. Where any saving offered exceeds the minimum £2,000 combined Government/Hyundai contribution under the Scrappage Scheme's rules, the additional incentive applies only to vehicles ordered between 1 January and 28 February 2010 and registered no more than 4 months later and may be varied or withdrawn at any time. Please check www.hyundai.co.uk for details of current offers. The Scrappage Scheme incentives cannot be used, unless otherwise stated, in conjunction with any other offers. Scrappage Scheme is not applicable in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. Scrappage Scheme customers agree to the dealer supplying their personal data to the Government for its use in the assessment of the Scheme.
Warranty only available on new cars purchased in the UK and sourced from Hyundai Motor UK Limited through its authorised dealers. See your local dealer for full warranty terms and conditions. Terms and conditions apply.

Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai i10 Classic 1.2: Urban 44.8 (6.3) Extra Urban 65.7 (4.3), Combined 56.5 (5.0), CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai i20 Classic 1.2 (2010 Model Year): Urban 44.1 (6.4), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.5), Combined 54.3 (5.2), CO_2 Emissions 124g/km. Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai i30 Classic 1.4 (2010 Model Year): Urban 37.2 (7.6), Extra Urban 54.3 (5.2), Combined 46.3 (6.1), CO_2 Emissions 145g/km.

To take a test drive contact us at:
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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda2 range: Urban 37.2 (7.6) - 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 60.1 (4.7) - 80.7 (3.5), Combined 49.6 (5.7) - 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 emissions (g/km) 135 - 107.

*The Government/Mazda Scrappage payment applies to cars first registered on or before 29 February 2000, or for vans on or before 28 February 2002 when traded in against new cars or LCV's. The new vehicle must be ordered between 1 January 2010 and 28 February 2010, and registered within 4 months of ordered date. Scrapped vehicles must have been registered to the purchaser for at least 12 months preceding the purchase of the vehicle, be taxed and insured and come with a valid MOT certificate. The registered keeper must have a UK address and the trade-in vehicle must be clear of finance. Terms and conditions apply. Subject to availability at participating dealers only, and subject to availability of funds from the Government Car and Van Scrappage Scheme. Model shown: Mazda2 1.5 Sir Sport. OTR price £12,290 Model shown features optional metallic paint. On the road price includes 17.5% VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months road fund licence, 1st registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. Details correct at time of going to print.

Hyundai wishes you 'many happy returns'

FAR from mourning the passing of the £2,000-a-go Government-sponsored Scrappage scheme, Hyundai plans to uphold its spirit with new deals.

These include 'Trade and Upgrade', allowing the same £2,000 part exchange offer as Scrappage and 'Happy Returns', allowing existing Hyundai Scrappage customers the chance to swap to a new 2010-reg car in March for as little as £499.

"We have learned some valuable lessons from the 33,000 people who have bought cars from us under the Scrappage scheme" said Hyundai UK MD Tony Whitehorn.

"They love transparent pricing. They hate haggling. And if they see a good deal they will snap it up.

"What we are offering post-Scrappage will build on this experience and will change the way cars are bought in the UK forever."

Under Trade and Upgrade buyers can choose any new Hyundai, not just the more expensive models.

With Happy Returns, people who bought a new i10 city car, i20 supermini or i30 family hatch last year can swap it for a 2010-reg Hyundai any time up until the car's first anniversary, saving the customer the cost of the first service and tax disc renewal.

The new car will also, of course, have a fresh five-year warranty – a standard feature across the Korean marque's range.

The customer's contribution to the deal will be £499 for an i10, £599 for an i20 or £749 for an i30 – they can trade up and down the range to switch to a different car or add options.

Consistent award-winning Volkswagen hatchbacks

VOLKSWAGEN has landed a string of awards for its current generation Polo and Golf hatchbacks, both demonstrating above-average levels of refinement for their classes.

The new three/five-door Polo supermini (from £9,910) gained particular recognition after winning the current European Car of the Year award, while both VWs won their respective categories in the latest What Car? magazine awards – the UK's 'motoring Oscars'.

The market had a taste of why the Polo has been so well-received, when the German car giant preceded it with the latest generation Golf, which carried over all the driver-pleasing features of its predecessor while also setting a new benchmark for cabin quality and refinement in the family hatchback sector.

The three/five-door Golf (from £14,850)has also made significant inroads into the company car sector, now helped by an eco-friendly BlueMotion model (from £18,100) with a road tax-exempt 99g/km CO2 figure.

For those of an economical mind, VW also produces the three-door Fox model from £7,460 and has introduced low-emission, small-capacity turbocharged petrol engines for several model line-ups, but VW is not all about counting the pennies; as ever, the Golf has a legendary GTI version (from £24,175) and then there is the reborn Scirocco (from £18,860) – one of the most stylish yet affordable coupes available.

The marque has also created a classy folding hardtop coupe, the Eos (from £20,320) and offers two rugged 4x4/SUV contenders in the Tiguan (from £20,125) and Touareg flagship (from £31,290), as well as the limo-class Phaeton (from £45,565).

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RENAULT

The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the I-Music range are: Urban 28.5-37.2 (9.9-7.6), Extra Urban 47.9-57.6 (5.9-4.9), Combined 38.2-47.9 (7.4-5.9). The official CO2 emission figures for the range are 174-139g/km.

Offers apply to vehicles ordered between 5th & 14th February 2010 and registered by 31st March 2010 and are available to retail customers only. These offers are not available in conjunction with any other offers and are correct at time of going to press.

Seat sales race ahead

SEAT is looking forward optimistically in 2010 after an exceptional sales performance over the past 12 months.

Official figures for 2009 confirm that the sporty Spanish brand logged its best-ever market share in the UK with 1.5 per cent – December's share of 1.64 per cent came within a whisker of the marque's all-time market high for the month (1.65 per cent in 2003) despite the recession.

Seat's sporty, stylish and engaging model line-up – ranging from the Ibiza supermini through sporty Leon hatch and practical Altea and Altea XL, to capacious seven-seat Alhambra and luxurious Exeo saloon and ST – will be joined by new Ibiza ST and ultra-quick Leon Cupra R performance flagships.

Seat's biggest sellers in 2009 were the Ibiza sisters, the more practical five-door (from £10,260) and rakish three-door SportCoupe (from £9,470).

The five-door Leon (from £13,970), with its coupe lines aided by the visual trick of recessing the rear door handles into the door frames, gave able support, while the Altea (from £14,170) and Altea XL (from £15,390) sporting MPVs offered an almost unique pitch for that sector of the car market.

But Seat also opened up a new executive sales line in the form of the well-equipped Exeo saloon (from £18,775) and ST estate.

Aside from this and well-established sporting credentials, Seat has also championed the shift to greener motoring with a line-up of environmentally responsible Ecomotive models led by the road tax exempt low-emission (99g/km CO2) Ibiza Ecomotive (from £12,790).

Citroën steps out from the shadows

FOR so long in the shadow of brand partner Peugeot, Citroën has re-discovered the innovation and style promoted by founder André Citroën.

Both are highlighted by its current range of superminis and highly-successful Picasso MPV sub-brand, but the French marque will also soon embark on a new venture with the launch of the DS3 – first of a premium car collection.

The DS3 is an undisguised tilt at the BMW Mini and Fiat 500, two cult cars made more popular by generous customising options.

For now, Citroën has big news in the form of the newly-launched five-door C3 (from £10,790) supermini, with the first panoramic windscreen widely available on a small car and a more upmarket cabin than its predecessor.

This car slots in above the bargain basement C1 city car – available with three and five doors – priced from £8,495.

The brand also has impressive contenders in the hard-fought family hatchback and family/company car sectors in the form of the three-door coupe/five-door C4 (from £14,395) and the 'Teutonic' C5 saloon/estate (from £18,995) designed particularly to attack and undercut German rivals.

Citroën also has a distinctive luxury flagship, the C6 (from £34,795) though even this cannot distract from the brand's diverse MPV range.

The sharply styled Picassos – five and seven-seat C4 versions (from £17,205) and the SUV-lookalike C3 (from £12,445) – dominate attention, but Citroën has also enjoyed success with the budget Nemo and Berlingo Multispace models, derived from vans though these in turn use car platforms for better ride and handling.

Official Government Test Environmental Data – Fuel Consumption Figures mpg (litres/100km): The All New Astra Range: urban – from 28.8 (9.9) to 49.6 (5.7), Extra-urban – from 50.4 (5.6) to 68.9 (4.1), Combined – from 39.8 (7.1) to 60.1 (4.7). CO_2 Emissions from 167 to 124g/km.

MINIMUM DEPOSIT OF 50% REQUIRED ON EXCLUSIV MODELS AND 30% ON ALL OTHER MODELS. Finance by GMAC UK plc, applicants must be aged 18 or over. Offer available to private individuals, Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only). All other sales categories are excluded. Offers may not apply to all Retailer stocks and apply to selected new vehicles ordered or registered between 04.12.09 and 31.03.10, and are subject to status, eligibility, terms and conditions. (Vaux87221)

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TOPGEAR MAGAZINE AWARDS 2009 Skoda Yeti

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42 monthly payments of	£199.00
Deposit	£3250.22
Retail cash price	£13,990.00
Amount of credit	£10,739.78
Optional final payment	£4,406.07
Total amount payable	£16,000.29
Acceptance fee†	£125.00
Option to purchase fee††	£60.00
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Model shown is Yeti S 1.2 TSI 105bhp at £14,675 RRP, including optional metallic paint at £400 RRP. Prices are accurate at time of print. **Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the Škoda Range: Urban 19.2 (14.7) – 53.3 (5.3), Extra-urban 38.2 (7.4) – 83.1 (3.4), Combined 28.0 (10.1) – 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 emissions for the Škoda Range 109 – 235g/km.**
Retail sales only. Licenced credit brokers. †Payable with first payment. ††Payable with optional final payment. Further charges may be payable if vehicle is returned.
Indemnities may be required. Subject to status. Available to over 18s for registrations before 31st March 2010 (subject to availability). Offer may be varied or withdrawn at any time.
ŠkodaAuto Finance is a trading name of Volkswagen Financial Services (UK) Limited, Freepost VWFS. Offer ends 31st March 2010.

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Far East tigers await UK export expansion

By **STEVE LOADER**
steve.loader@kosmedia.co.uk

SHORTLY after a top level 'export or die' post-recession rallying call, it has emerged that Kent and the South East is leading the charge.

Our region accounted for 17 per cent of UK exports by value – more than £9 billion – in the third quarter of 2009, with the north west (11 per cent) and London (10) the nearest rivals.

Export muscle like this is what global money experts at Ernst and Young called for as the UK turned the corner on the worst recession since the 1930s – albeit with a weak 0.1 per cent rate of growth in the final quarter of 2009.

A senior Ernst and Young adviser, Professor Peter Spencer, said "for many firms it will be a case of export or die", since UK consumers were too "spent out" to fund recovery, while public cuts, and not spending, were the Government's only option, leaving the country to fall back on traditional strength in exporting.

And export giant China – the biggest beneficiary from a decade of reckless spending and consumerism in Western economies – is seen as the UK's prime target. Would-be exporters can also benefit from the timely launch of a new Exporters' Package from NatWest and RBS in the region, offering businesses a free review to help identify overseas opportunities for growth, while maintaining a healthy cash position.

OUTWARD BOUND: The South East is spearheading the country's latest export push

Greg Jones, the banks' MD for business and commercial banking for the South East, said: "Exporting can seem a complex activity, with a lengthy order-to-cash cycle, and we're here to help simplify the process and offer support.

"In addition to having a strong product that appeals to overseas markets, you need to be able to assess prospective customers' credit standing as well as cross-border collection risks.

"You also need to have a strong understanding of the specific risks you face in exporting."

He said the new export drive would at least benefit from the weak pound making UK goods cheaper than rivals in the euro bloc, but added: "UK exports are not very price-sensitive and we think that the push towards overseas markets will mainly be driven by a lack of demand at home.

"It is vital the UK rejuvenates its overseas investment model and starts selling into countries such as China, where we have an exceptionally low market share compared with our competitors. The UK's recovery is reliant on a roaring trade with the tiger economies."

Business park's confidence boost

ST GEORGE'S Business Park in Sittingbourne opened 2010 in style by welcoming five new businesses and registering a high level of further interest.

David Clapham, operations director for park owner Capital Enterprise Centres (CEC) believes it points to real recovery this year.

"There is increasing confidence that 2010 will be a year in which businesses can move forward and our centres are ready to help companies take full advantage of the opportunities the new year will bring," he said.

Businesses moving to St George's include F1 Hobbies, Autographs Store.Com, Scott Care, KSL Cleaning Services, and Otaga Electrical.

CEC also runs the Churchill Square Business Centre at Kings Hill, West Malling.

Economy drive

BOOMING demand for used commercial vehicles may be an unlikely yet accurate barometer of strength returning to the UK economy, despite the newly reported 0.1 per cent growth in late 2009.

Vans and trucks are regarded as the blood in the economy's veins and an upsurge of interest and prices particularly, can be a healthy sign.

Market watchers at Glass's Guide, the vehicle market's valuation 'bible' say demand across this sector consistently outstripped supply during January, hoisting prices.

And Glass's commercial vehicles editor George Alexander expects the trend to continue through the first half of 2010, unless manufacturers start discounting to take advantage of overall demand.

Vans are the major targets for buyers, with panel vans – the Ford Transit class – most sought after, said Mr Alexander.

By **LIZ RULE**
Pharon Independent Financial Advisers Ltd

A window of opportunity on pensions

FROM April 6, 2010, pension investors will no longer be able to take benefits at age 50 but will have to wait until they are 55.

For many this will not be a problem, as few can afford to retire at that age, but you need to be aware if you were born between April, 1955, and April, 1960.

If you need to crystallise any of your pension benefits for any reason, there is a window of opportunity, which will shut again for up to five years for some, come April.

There are many reasons why people take pension benefits early. Some who have amassed larger pension pots simply wish to access the tax-free cash, perhaps to buy a holiday home and leave the remaining monies invested until they actually need an income from it, perhaps much later in retirement.

Lifeline

For others, perhaps in debt, accessing their pension early has been a lifeline when all other options of finance have failed.

These instances are unfortunate and we only deal with them if they are a last resort, but in some cases they make the difference between financial survival or not.

Whatever the reason, for some investors, the option of utilising their pension money early is going to disappear.

If you fit in the window where your options are going to be curtailed, you should be clear about how this will affect you and get advice.

This need for advice includes anyone in the relevant age bracket who is phasing their crystallisations by partially withdrawing as and when required, as new encashments will not be allowed until age 55.

Coniston reviving the glory days

LANDMARK: Computer image of how the Coniston Hotel will look on completion in spring

MILLIONS have been splashed on lavish redevelopment of a Sittingbourne hotel which closed in 2003 after controversial Government plans to house asylum seekers there.

Before that, the Coniston Hotel in London Road had been a landmark in the Kent town and will now be reborn as a four-star place to stay.

The project has been piloted by local businessmen Ernie Berntsen and Chris Richardson who recently sold their successful fire alarm systems company IFP Ltd in Upchurch.

They spent four years renovating Coniston House, built as a private home in the 1880s, before turning their attention to the old hotel section, boarded up after the refuge proposal was shelved after residents' protests.

"The hotel was a prominent and successful feature in Sittingbourne in times gone by. That drove us to embark on this project with the aim of creating a facility for the whole community," said Mr Berntsen. "We feel privileged to have the opportunity to regenerate such an important asset and look forward to opening in the spring.

"We believe the Coniston will provide a refreshing alternative for businesses wanting real value and four-star facilities outside of London. We are also perfectly positioned for leisure travellers from Belgium, Holland, France and Germany – all markets that have shown interest."

The new-look Coniston will have conference and banqueting facilities as well as a ballroom, 71 en-suite bedrooms and eight suites, plus a fine dining restaurant for 100.

To view, search 'Hadlow' @ yourkenttv.co.uk

Julie Maddocks talks to Hadlow College's finance director Mark Lumsden-Taylor

Walk tall on the road to recovery with five points

By **STEVE LOADER**
steve.loader@kosmedia.co.uk

DESPITE the UK's stumbling emergence from recession, Government-sponsored advisory service Business Link South East has called on Kent companies to be positive.

It also urged adoption of this five-point recovery plan to build upon news that the economy grew 0.1 per cent in the final quarter of 2009:

• Get your people on board. If confidence builds from the reported upturn, you may find a change in attitude among staff who have so far felt grateful for a job.

Ask yourself whether imbalances or skill gaps might hinder your business plan or the smooth running of your business or inhibit changes you want to make.

Motivation

Rebuild employee motivation. The chance to learn new skills may increase commitment. Can you harness creative energy released by optimism?

Ensure you invest enough resources into creative activities that result in revenue-generating innovations. Long-term profitability and business value depends on being creative and innovative, especially in highly competitive markets.

Is there any resistance to change or tensions and conflicts? Discuss your business and ideas for change with staff continually.

• Build a resilient and flexible plan. Businesses with a clear strategy are more optimistic, but stay flexible and don't throw caution to the wind. Identify risks in your business and try to minimise them. Include short and long-term contingencies.

Track performance against your plan, using indicators that give a quick and accurate view of your business and not just financial ones.

• Maintain cost control. During the past 18 months most businesses kept costs under constant review – don't relax now.

Watch overheads and review suppliers and get comparative quotes, but take care that cost-cutting does not damage growth opportunities or impact on service.

• Maintain active credit and cashflow controls. If you implemented credit control procedures in 2009, you should be benefiting now. If you missed the opportunity though, it's not too late and may help win the race to recovery. Credit control is cheaper to implement and more sustainable than invoice factoring and bank overdrafts.

Undertake credit checks or secure an upfront payment. Provide discount incentives for early payment and negotiate payment plans as a last resort.

Keep open communication with debtors and maintain a detailed forecast for your business, showing expected amounts of income and expenditure.

• Invest in marketing. Successful businesses do so. If you reduced marketing activity, reinstate it or consider low-cost alternatives.

Consider direct selling as part of the marketing mix and measure the cost-effectiveness of each member of the team in terms of the profit margin they earn.

Fuelling the revolution

KENT company Aquafuel is at the heart of the drive to improve the efficiency of biofuel production.

Based at Kent Science Park, near Sittingbourne, and working in conjunction with leading biofuel supplier Greenergy, Aquafuel has developed technology enabling standard diesel-engine combined heat and power (CHP) generators to run on crude glycerin (glycerol).

The technology allows biodiesel producers to generate their own electrical power and use the waste heat to provide process steam for the actual biodiesel production.

Glycerin is a by-product of biodiesel production, with a gallon of crude glycerin produced for every nine gallons of biodiesel created.

Combustion

As a result of its density and high oxygen content, glycerin offers exceptionally clean combustion, with much lower emissions than diesel fuel. Excess electricity generated by the producers can be sold to the local grid or used to run electric boilers for more process steam.

Director of Aquafuel Paul Day said: "Biodiesel producers can become close to self-sufficient in terms of energy usage and make drastic cuts in fossil fuel usage.

"Our technology opens up the potential for any liquid fuels, from ethanol to gasoline, to be burnt at diesel efficiencies and dramatically improve the performance of this increasingly important industry."

Kent Science Park director James Speck said: "The park has a longstanding reputation for the development of environmental technologies. Aqualfuel's success is further evidence of the groundbreaking science being undertaken in Kent."

Power down your IT and start saving

ON THE MOVE: Seminars will explain the many benefits of IT infrastructure virtualisation

GOING green is increasingly seen as sound business rather than salving the conscience, ***writes KOS Media Business Editor Steve Loader.***

And ADA Technology Services at Kings Hill, West Malling, now wants to highlight particular benefits from Green IT through a series of free seminars for Kent businesses.

Each Green IT seminar outlines practical steps mid-size companies can take to dramatically reduce the power their IT infrastructures use. Other benefits include reduced operating costs and improved disaster recovery capabilities.

ADA's Roger Woodcock said: "These interactive workshops will give Kent-based organisations the opportunity to learn from live virtualisation projects and to meet organisations which have already made the move to either server or desktop virtualisation infrastructures.

"Organisations can learn from ADA's own use of virtual 'thin client' desktop computers.

"We have enjoyed low power usage and reduced operational overheads for five years. Furthermore, our virtualised infrastructure made the relocation of ADA's Kent office from Canterbury to West Malling very straightforward.

Simplified

"Run on a virtualised desktop VMware platform, the process of moving offices was greatly simplified because all data was held and backed up centrally at ADA's primary data centre in Sussex."

The first of the half-day Green IT seminars is on Thursday, February 25, at the Capital Enterprise Centre, West Malling.

Attendance at each seminar is limited to 20 delegates. For details, call 01444 232 000 or email enquiries@ADA.co.uk. For the event agenda, visit www.ADA.co.uk/Green-IT-Campaign.

• ENVIRONMENTAL expert Simon de Grey, from Pivotal Performance, says businesses that show they do not add to climate change will be more in demand this year.

"The recent climate change conference in Denmark is likely to lead to the most green-aware decade we have ever lived through," said de Grey, whose company specialises in health, safety and environmental training nationwide.

"Many businesses that I consult with are shocked at how many resources they waste in normal operations, and how easy it is to cut back consumption and costs without damaging the business.

"The UK is only third from the bottom in a European 'Green' league table – much more needs to be done to encourage businesses to go green. I think the opportunity to cut costs and increase sales will motivate business leaders to act."

MORTGAGE RATES

RT: Rate type **R%:** Rate percentage **L:** Loan **U:** Until **OD:** Other details

FIXED

WOOLWICH
RT: FIXED **R%:** 3.79% **L:** 70% **U:** 30/04/2012
OD: £1,304

PRINCIPALITY
RT: FIXED **R%:** 4.49% **L:** 75% **U:** 31/03/2013
OD: £1,039

NATWEST
RT: FIXED **R%:** 4.89% **L:** 75% **U:** 31/03/2013
OD: £829

BM SOLUTIONS
RT: FIXED **R%:** 5.29% **L:** 75% **U:** 28/02/2013
OD: £2,174

OTHER

NORTHERN ROCK
RT: TRACKER **R%:** 2.75% **L:** 70% **U:** 01/04/2012
OD: £1,030

ABBEY
RT: TRACKER **R%:** 2.63% **L:** 70% **U:** 2 YEARS
OD: £1,030

MORTGAGE BOX
RT: TRACKER **R%:** 2.79% **L:** 70% **U:** 28/02/2012
OD: £1,030

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER
RT: TRACKER **R%:** 1.99% **L:** 70% **U:** 2 YEARS
OD: £2,030

• THESE RATES CANNOT BE GUARANTEED AND ARE CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

FAMILY INCOME BENEFIT FOR £1,500 PER MONTH TO AGE 60

* ALL PREMIUMS ARE GUARANTEED & ASSUME THAT THE COVER PROVIDED REMAINS LEVEL THROUGHOUT TERM OF CONTRACT & ARE BASED ON SINGLE LIFE & NON SMOKER RATES AND ASSUME ACCEPTANCE AFTER UNDERWRITING AT ORDINARY RATES

MALE AGED 30		FEMALE AGED 30	
SCOT PROVIDENT	£14.39	SCOT PROVIDENT	£11.40
LEGAL & GENERAL	£15.40	LEGAL & GENERAL	£11.65
LV=	£15.63	LV=	£12.77
AEGON SCOT EQ	£16.77	AEGON SCOT EQ	£13.01
BRIGHT GREY	£18.19	BRIGHT GREY	£13.51
MALE AGED 40		**FEMALE AGED 40**	
AEGON SCOT EQ	£17.35	LEGAL & GENERAL	£13.30
LV=	£17.55	SCOT PROVIDENT	£13.68
SCOT PROVIDENT	£17.62	LV=	£14.26
LEGAL & GENERAL	£17.65	BUPA	£14.83
BUPA	£18.72	AEGON SCOT EQ	£15.16

• THESE RATES CANNOT BE GUARANTEED AND ARE CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

JARGON BUSTER

What does it all mean?

• SERVER VIRTUALISATION: Allows organisations to consolidate more IT resources on less hardware. Server virtualisation delivers storage capacity, power reduction and cooling benefits

• DESKTOP VIRTUALISATION: In the same way server virtualisation enables consolidation of server or storage hardware, desktop virtualisation allows an organisation to integrate its PC/laptop appliances into its back office infrastructure. In traditional PC/server environments, a Microsoft Word document, for example, would be stored on a central server but edited on a remote PC using software stored on the PC. Desktop virtualisation allows organisations to run all software on a central server and replace PCs and laptops with thin client devices

• THIN CLIENTS: Thin client devices are designed to replace desktop PCs and laptops. Given that all processing is carried out on a central server, thin client devices require no moving parts (hard drives, etc) and consume much less energy. They have a much longer life cycle and require little or no maintenance. They also improve network security

• SAN: Storage Area Networks are generally used to improve flexibility and manageability of storage infrastructure. When used in virtualised server/desktop environments, organisations can quickly recover data should a problem arise. They simplify backup and offer a dependable disaster recovery solution

Is your business complying with legislation?

Help is at Hand!

Did you know the following courses are being offered at Thanet College throughout March?

FIRST AID
First Aid at Work - 1 March 2010
Automated External Defibrillator - 4 March 2010
Emergency First Aid at Work - 16 March 2010
First Aid at Work Refresher - 22 March 2010

CATERING & HOSPITALITY
Food Hygiene Level 2 - 18 March 2010
National Certificate for Personal License Holders - 15 March 2010

Plus.... other courses on offer
IT Certificate in Book-keeping (computerised) - 9 March 2010
IT Skills for the Office - 25 Feb 32010
Beginners IT - 24 April 2010

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT / AWARENESS COURSES
An Introduction to Dyslexia - 5 March 2010
An Introduction to Eating Disorders - 12 March 2010
Assertiveness Training - 19 March 2010

For more information, please contact the **Training Solutions Team** on **01843 605036** or email **training.solutions@thanet.ac.uk**

THANET COLLEGE

To advertise in this section
01303 817150

Angels making light of recession

ASHFORD'S branch of the nationwide Office Angels recruitment agency is flying high after the firm's 2009 Awards.

Established in 1986, Angels claims it has thrived despite the recession and its Ashford branch has clearly played its part, with top awards for two members against stiff competition from branches in major cities.

Nicola Hamley won first place as permanent consultant and Lindsay Prescott scooped sixth place as temporary consultant.

"The Ashford team have outperformed the market," said Angels MD David Clubb.

"They work hard for their candidates and clients, day in, day out."

Senior business manager Helana Barnes said: "The Ashford branch goes from strength to strength. Last year was not as bad as predicted for us, there are vacancies and we continued to make placements and take temp bookings."

Pictured at the awards are, from left: Carly James, Nicola Hamley, Helana Barnes, Abbie Robinson, Keighley Hopper and Lindsay Prescott.

Take a hike and help Haiti relief

STAFF in Tunbridge Wells offices are being asked to stage a walk out next week, but not in protest at pay and conditions.

Instead, they will benefit from some fresh air and gentle exercise and help the victims of the earthquake in Haiti by joining the 'Great Office Walkout' around the Old Racecourse on Tunbridge Wells Common on Friday, February 12, organised by Daniels Fitness Group.

Those who want to join the walk out are asked to assemble at the Lower Cricket Ground for a 1pm start – the walk is expected to take no more than 30 minutes to complete and there is a minimum donation £5 per person to the Haiti earthquake victims.

Sponsor forms are available via www.danielsfitnessgroup.co.uk and, for more on how the money raised will be used, visit www.dec.gov.uk.

Old school legal tie at 'Twitter law firm'

By **STEVE LOADER**
steve.loader@kosmedia.co.uk

FAST-growing Kent law firm Griffin Law founder Donal Blaney is happy to be joined by an 'old boy' from his two schools.

DONAL BLANEY

Coincidentally but at different times, Griffin Law's new managing partner and commercial and property ligation expert Peter Burfoot, also attended Blaney's old schools of Holmewood House Prep School near Tunbridge Wells and renowned public school, Tonbridge.

His arrival highlights remarkable growth and fame for Griffin Law, which opened just six months ago in Hawkhurst with four staff and ambitions to 'serve the High Weald of Kent', but was then quickly involved in a ground-breaking legal initiative, following anonymous impersonation of Donal Blaney – also a noted internet blogger under the banner Blaney's Blarney (donalblaney.com).

The High Court showed that, while it may be steeped in tradition, it is not behind the times by granting an order which allowed service of an injunction via Twitter.

The order – now dubbed Blaney's Blarney Order – requires an unknown Twitter user anonymously posting under the same name, and thus breaching the copyright and intellectual property of the blog's owner, to stop posting and immediately identify themselves.

It was the first such order served via Twitter and has been hailed as a step towards ending anonymous breaches of the law on Twitter and internet sites.

Griffin Law had previously prevented internet impersonation before on Facebook and a blogging site and the firm's barrister Matthew Richardson, who devised and won the Blaney's Blarney Order, said it was: "A huge step forward in preventing anonymous abuse of the internet.

"People have to learn that they can no longer hide behind the cloak of anonymity the internet provides and break the law with impunity."

Mr Blaney said it was: "An important step in dealing with online bullying. The scales of justice have been tilted in favour of innocent victims."

'Best practice' doesn't always make perfect

EXPERIENCED project manager Mary McKinlay has declared war on the buzz phrase 'best practice'.

You might have thought this was the opposite of what she should preach as head of her eponymous West Malling-based project management consultancy, but she said: "The phrase implies that there is only one way of doing something – the best way.

"I would suggest that there are often several ways of achieving success. Labelling something as best practice can stifle innovation and prevent people from thinking further.

"Over the years I have often seen today's 'best practice' become tomorrow's disaster.

"We generally use the phrase to describe something which has been seen to be effective but, as we all know, no two projects are identical and situations change.

"So, let's hear it for 'good practice' and not sit back on our past triumphs."

Mary has 30 years' experience as a project manager practitioner, researcher and trainer, notably in the aerospace and defence industries. She started her career on the RAF's Tornado warplane and has also contributed to several civil aviation and submarine projects.

MARY McKINLAY: War on weasel words

NEARLY half of employees have stolen company equipment or 'intellectual property' on leaving a job, according to a survey by Landesk.

Items commonly pilfered include mobile phones (21 per cent), software (17) and even laptops (eight).

Some of the more bizarre items disappearing include a drill, towel and even a set of handlebars. One in 10 employees even admitted pinching colleagues' belongings.

Such findings more than justify the launch of Landesk's latest Asset Lifecycle Management software, enabling companies to track company property throughout its entire lifecycle.

Landesk's Andy Baldin said: "For a business, if you lose something like a laptop, it's not just the cost of the product, but also the information on it."

BURGESS Hodgson has achieved 'Ones to Watch' status in the prestigious 2010 Best Companies Accreditation – the 'Michelin stars' of the business world.

The award recognises how the Canterbury firm of chartered accountants motivated and engaged its staff during the worst UK recession since the 1930s.

A record 1,086 organisations from the private and public sectors applied for Best Companies Accreditation and Burgess Hodgson was one of just 50 achieving the highest accolade.

KENT-based charity Avante Partnership has appointed chartered accountant Richard Davis as a trustee.

He has held several partner level positions in Kent-based accountancy firms, most recently and since 1998 as a founding partner in Chavereys Chartered Accountants – previously of Ashford, now of Faversham.

He is also a long standing trustee and treasurer of the Pilgrims Hospices in East Kent and now adds his expertise to the board of a regional charity that, through Avante Care and Support and Stepahead Support, provides a range of care and support services to more than 4,000 older people, children, young people and families.

FRAUD investigators have found a 10,000-name hit list of potential targets for a shares scam.

The list is now being used by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and City of London Police for a letter drop to 6,500 homes to alert those on the list as part of Operation Warn.

The scam is thought to be the work of so-called 'boiler room' fraudsters, unauthorised, overseas-based companies with bogus UK addresses and phone lines routed abroad. Dealing with an unauthorised firm means you do not have access to the financial complaints and compensation schemes. Share fraud is estimated to cost the UK £200 million a year; 3,100 people contacted the FSA last year after being targeted by boiler rooms – 734 were victims.

TRAIN operator Southeastern has committed to cutting 10 per cent off its total site energy use by the end of this year as part of the 10:10 campaign to reduce carbon output.

Spokesman Colin Clifton said: "As a company that runs only electric trains, we are aware we need to be managing our carbon output and looking at ways of reducing it without affecting services.

"We are proud to be the first rail company to make this public commitment which builds on the work we have already been doing.

"We have already reduced our carbon footprint by nearly 20 per cent and are determined to continue this in 2010."

Ex-stock car ace is white van man

ONE-TIME Superstox driver Lee Cradock may have swapped his souped-up stock car for a white van, but he's still out to beat the clock.

Lee set up his own courier business and now drives from A to B for business rather than round in circles for a hobby.

"I'm still out to get there quickly, but now it's all about meeting the customers' deadlines rather than winning trophies," said Lee of Ashford-based KW Couriers.

He's still closely connected with the world of racing though; a key client is motorsports performance suspension manufacturer KW Automotive. KW makes parts for race, road and track and when they need to get replacements to a team in a hurry they turn to Lee for help.

"I deliver urgent parts for KW right across the country and have even been asked to rush spares to a household name F1 team."

Lee used to work in London as an art director in the equally fast-moving world of advertising, before recession and a desire to be his own boss saw him leave the city to set up KW Couriers.

"With work in the design business becoming increasingly scarce I decided to take the plunge and set up on my own, and I'm glad I took the decision when I did," he said.

He now specialises in fast, efficient and carefully-handled deliveries for a range of companies, including legal firms, the health service and the Environmental Health Agency, and has shown he is as determined to win in business as he was on the track.

"I used to compete in oval track circuit racing and raced in the Spedeworth Superstox series in 2007 and 2008 under number 73," he said.

"Superstox is a single-seater open-wheel formula which allows mild contact, so it was a bumpy ride. I make sure that the goods I now carry have a much smoother ride.

"I'm still a big fan of the sport although I now watch it from the other side of the fence, and it's good to know that the delivery work I do for a number of the race teams means my former rivals and team mates can get out there and enjoy the racing as much as I used to."

DRIVEN MAN: Lee Cradock has a much smoother ride with KW Couriers after his time on the Superstox circuit, below

Spy boss 'M' to spill her secrets

FORMER head of MI5 Dame Stella Rimington will use a Kent conference to share insights into guiding the James Bond bureau through times of change.

Dame Stella – who provided the inspiration for Judi Dench's portrayal of movie superspy James Bond's boss – joins other top speakers at the third Kent HR Conference on Thursday, March 4, from 9.30am to 4.30pm.

TOP SECRET: Dame Stella Rimington

Hosted at Ashford International Hotel by Kent County Council, the aim is to bring public and private sector human resources practitioners together to share techniques and generate new ideas.

Another leading participant is Maidstone-based Adrian Webster, motivational speaker and author of Polar Bear Pirates And Their Quest to Reach Fat City, who will share practical tips on how to create a winning environment on a shoestring budget.

He said: "I normally take the train to the north or speak in London, so it's a pleasure to be presenting to a home audience.

"Things have moved on since my first book and I hope to be able to give my Polar Bear Pirates new skills to equip them to engage and inspire everyday people to deliver extraordinary results."

For more information, click on www.kent.gov.uk/kenthrconference.

You can count on us

PENNY DROPS: Wrotham Primary has set up a school bank

BANKING can be child's play, if the experiences of Wrotham Primary School are anything to go by.

With the help of NatWest, assistant headteacher Sarah Green has encouraged pupils to set up a bank at the school to help them understand running an account and managing their money.

It forms part of NatWest's MoneySense for Schools, the UK's largest financial education programme.

The in-house bank is run by pupils who have received cashier training from NatWest staff.

Pupils can open an account and pay in money. They also receive regular statements, which NatWest staff go through with them to help them understand the process of running a bank account.

Ms Green said: "The pupils are excited about this venture. It's important to gain basic money management skills and setting up, running and using their own bank is a way of doing this."

Sandra Latter of NatWest said: "It's essential that pupils are equipped with the financial skills required to make decisions in adult life. Once they go out into the world of work and start earning money, it's important they know what to do with it."

Timeline

KOS Media sport takes a look at the highlights of all the sporting action from the last 100 years

1910

100 YEARS AGO: ANYONE who thinks the tendency for clubs to blame the men in the middle for their shortcomings is a modern phenomenon needs only look at the minutes of a Kent League meeting a century ago. Members were so irate about the standard of officiating they forced the league to effectively suspend a number of referees.

Under league policy any referee on the county list was entitled to at least one Kent League fixture per season, but complaints about some individuals were so frequent that the league caved in and 'rested' several officials.

The league also decided to expand from 12 to 15 teams, inviting Woolwich Arsenal, Millwall and Crystal Palace to field reserve sides.

The former Maidstone United player and future England cricketer Wally Hardinge, now with Sheffield United, was called into the England squad for their game with Ireland.

As many as 5,000 fans were at Priestfield to see a shock 3-1 defeat for New Brompton at the hands of Croydon Common in the Southern League.

1960

50 YEARS AGO: GILLINGHAM were struggling to bring a new striker to Priestfield.

"We are, in all sincerity, trying to find a player who would strengthen our present team," chairman Joe Leech said. "From inquiries I and my fellow directors have made it would seem there is a shortage of inside forwards throughout the country."

Finding the money for someone within the existing budget was also a problem.

"(We are) having to find £1,500 in wages and expenses until the end of the season," Leech said. "The directors cannot afford to find the money themselves for an exorbitant transfer fee. We will pay in the region of between £2,000 and £3,000 for a player who will, we feel, be of the calibre we are seeking."

1985

25 YEARS AGO: JOHN Pocock, was re-elected unopposed as chairman of Kent County Cricket Club for the seventh year on the trot, but his newly-appointed captain, Chris Cowdrey (pictured) was toiling in India in the final Test.

Although he took the key wicket of Mohammad Azharuddin in India's first innings, Cowdrey's figures were 1 for 103 and he made just one when he batted.

The match was drawn, with England winning the series 2-1.

A last-minute equaliser from Martin Robinson earned Gillingham a 1-1 draw with Swansea, but infuriated Swans boss John Bond, a former Gills coach, who claimed the corner that led to the goal should never have been given.

It was an opinion backed by Gills player John Leslie, who admitted his side were lucky to escape with a draw.

If you have any fascinating stories from the above years gone by, email them to our sports editor at **glenn.pearson@kosmedia.co.uk**

Making a racket

First Kent Open bid to improve squash's popularity

By **DAVID PRITCHARD**

WORLD-CLASS squash is coming to the county his summer with the inaugural Kent Open, which organisers hope will stimulate a surge in interest for the sport.

The five-day ranking tournament in June will be part of the Professional Squash Association (PSA)'s World Tour calendar. A high-quality field is expected for the event, to be held at The Mote Squash Club in Maidstone.

It follows the success of The Mote Classic, an invitational event held as a warm-up event last summer. Alan Thatcher, chairman of the Kent Squash and Racketball Association, is excited by the prospect of staging a world-ranking event.

He said: "It was always our intention to host a world-ranking event and that's what we've managed to achieve. I guess it's the culmination of several years' hard work to put a professional tournament together."

SUCCESS: The Mote Classic at Maidstone last year was the catalyst for the Kent Open

Festival

A delighted David Verga, chairman at The Mote Squash Club, said: "It's nice because it's been a lean period for squash with clubs closing down. Putting on an event like this puts Kent back on the map."

A key aim of the event is to stimulate the grassroots game in Kent. Alongside the tournament will be the Kent Squash Festival, which takes place in the three months leading up to the Open. It will consist of coaching schemes and competitions for young players, with the final held alongside the Open.

Thatcher said: "We want a major legacy for squash in the county. The tournament and festival are linked, we want to make it so the kids can be really fired up. The junior development programme will snowball once the tournament is in place and you'll suddenly find lots of talented players."

England Squash have played a role in setting up both events, particularly plans for the festival, which has been spearheaded by development coach Steve Franks. Although the initiatives in schools are aimed at younger age groups, plans are expected to be confirmed soon which will expand it to 16-19 year-olds.

Paul Fennell, England Squash's regional manager for London, which includes Kent, believes it is a big opportunity to spark interest in squash among people who may have never played before.

He said: "Our job is around increasing participation in the sport.

"It's important for us to work together with a big high-profile event like this and involve the community. You can do one without the other but bringing them together makes it a much more rounded event."

It is hoped the Kent Open will become an annual fixture on the PSA World Tour, with plans to hold the closing stages of future tournaments in a glass court in the neighbouring leisure centre. The move would increase the capacity for spectators and expand the potential for television coverage.

This year's event will be held on June 2-6

County's young rugby stars aim to better last year's effort

KENT'S under-20 rugby side kick-off their national championship campaign today hoping to eclipse their performance from last year.

Head coach Taff Gwilliam led Kent to the quarter-finals of last year's competition and he believes the class of 2010 has the potential to go a step or two further.

Today's game against the Army takes place at Old Elthamians RFC with the two sides renewing acquaintances 12 months after producing a feisty encounter in last year's group stage.

Gwilliam said: "We've got pace, a lot of mobility and good skills, so if we can harness that and play to our potential we should do well. They [the Army] were in our group last year, we were fortunate to beat them in a close contest and I expect nothing different this time.

"We haven't set a target because we're trying to develop the team as the season goes on. From a coach's point of view, it would be nice to match last season's achievement and go even further this year if possible."

Kent warmed up for the tournament with a 37-12 win over St Barts & Royal London Medical Schools, and Gwilliam has narrowed his squad down from 35 to 22 for the London & South East region group B, which also contains Hampshire and Surrey.

KENT SQUAD: Cooper (Dover), Sandison, Spedding, Covington, Munton (all Blackheath), Carmen, Evans, Tomkins, Eydmann, Crust (all Sidcup), Bartolis, De Lange, Crawford, Allkin, Rogers (all Canterbury), Brown (Reading), T Bishop, A Bishop (both Gravesend), Brice (Medway), Parkes (Old Elthamians), Williams (Maidstone), Caddy (Beckenham).

AIMING HIGHER: The Kent side which reached the quarter-finals last year

Shepherd aims to be rock solid in Gibraltar

KIRK Shepherd takes to the oche in Gibraltar bidding to win a share of the £31,600 prize money on offer at the Players Championship.

Having failed to produce his best form at the World Championships in December, the 23-year-old finds himself in an incredibly strong field once again today, with James Wade, Mervyn King and Ronnie Baxter among the highest-ranked throwers in action.

The event was won by the all-conquering Phil Taylor in 2009, although neither the 15-time world champion or world number two Raymond van Barneveld have travelled to the Tercentenary Sports Hall this year.

Both John Part, who Shepherd memorably beat at the Alexandra Palace, and Mark Webster, who knocked the Ramsgate-born player out of the tournament, are also among the 111 Professional Darts Players Association entrants.

Play starts at noon local time, with all matches the best of 11 legs and the winner taking home £6,000. The home support will be for Dylan Duo, who last year became the first Gibraltarian to qualify for either version of the World Championships.

Former athletics star in push for Olympics bobsleigh gold

Kelly's world of thrills and pills

GOLDEN GIRLS: Kelly Thomas (back) and driver Paula Walker

By DAVID PRITCHARD

AS DEBUTS go, it's hard to imagine a more inauspicious start than when Kelly Thomas set foot in a bobsleigh for the first time.

A motion sickness sufferer, the high-speed run prompted her to be violently ill. Most people would take it as a fairly clear indication maybe bobsleigh was not the sport for them, but despite the obvious problem, Thomas was instantly hooked on one of sport's most exhilarating disciplines.

"I didn't know much about it beforehand. I had no idea what it felt like to be in a sled so it didn't cross my mind it would affect me," she said.

"Even though I was sick I absolutely loved it. I wanted to do it again but couldn't; I dreaded the thought of being sick all the time."

Sprinter

Fortunately a pill was prescribed to cure the problem and three years on from that disastrous first run, Thomas will line up for Great Britain in Vancouver for the Winter Olympics later this month.

Born in Sidcup, Thomas initially excelled as a sprinter.

Winning a bronze medal at the European Youth Olympics in 1997, she went on to become an accomplished athlete without quite making the step up to become world-class.

Growing stale in athletics, a friend suggested the skills would transfer well to bobsleigh. A successful trial at a talent identification day convinced Thomas to change sports, beginning a rapid ascent from complete novice to Olympic athlete.

Thomas, who now lives in Dartford, is aiming for a top-12 finish in Canada, but the fact she is competing at all is a huge achievement. With no official funding the 29-year-old has relied on personal sponsors and credit cards to fund her career.

The almost total lack of dedicated facilities in the UK complicates training and when they get to events the contrast between themselves and the top teams is huge.

She said: "The major countries are covered by big deals and have mechanics. We look after the equipment ourselves, anything that breaks we have to fix it – we didn't even have a physio with us this season.

"It's always down to the last minute to find sponsors and someone who believes in you, but in a way it's more rewarding. The fellow competitors will us on because they realise we have it quite hard."

Against the odds, brakeman Thomas and driver Paula Walker were ranked 10th in the World Cup rankings by the cut-off date before Christmas, just making the cut as Britain's second bobsleigh team.

Although up against the same field in Vancouver, Thomas is expecting the occasion to be completely different to a World Cup meeting.

She said: "Neither of us have been to an Olympics before, you can't compare anything to that so we don't quite know how it will feel.

"It's probably going to be more overwhelming than anything else we've done. It's only just starting to sink in. It was only when I went to pick up my kit that it dawns on you."

The Winter Olympics begin on Friday, with the bobsleigh competition under way on February 23.

Tak's back for one last title crack after two-year break

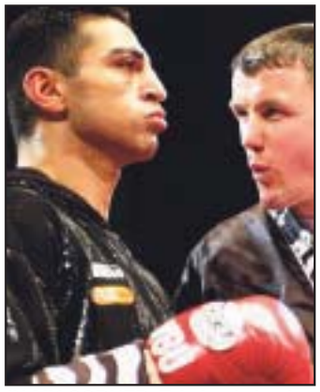
FORMER world light-middleweight and welterweight champion Takaloo is back in training and ready for one last shot at the big time, ***writes Mick Watkins.***

The former three-time WBU champion and WBO title challenger from Margate found out this week he had just missed out on a place in the Barry Hearn-promoted Prizefighter – the light-middleweights' tournament in London on February 26.

The 34-year-old had hoped to fight in the televised event at York Hall, Bethnal Green, but despite not being picked Tak said he wasn't too disappointed at missing the chance to win the Prizefighter cup and £25,000 first prize.

He said: "It would have been a great platform to get myself back into title contention, but at the same time would have been a bit of a rush what with getting my medical sorted.

"They've put me on standby in case someone gets injured so you never know, and I'm ready to fight, but having more time to get sparring in before I come back is probably a good thing."



IN MY CORNER: Takaloo is back with trainer Jimmy McDonnell

Meanwhile, Takaloo said he has patched things up with former trainer Jimmy McDonnell, the former European super-featherweight champion and world title challenger who helped guide the Margate Rock to his biggest wins.

McDonnell is training Olympic gold medallist James Degale and has also reunited with former world title challenger and Mike Tyson conqueror, Danny Williams. The chance to train alongside his old gym-mate Williams and spar with Degale is something Takaloo is relishing.

He said: "Jimmy's sorted himself out and has a proper gym and he's on the ball again. He has to be now he's training Degale. But that's good news because in my last few fights things didn't go too well. Without going into details, let's just say the set up was all over the place."

Takaloo is ready to talk to prospective managers, including former manager and promoter Frank Warren, and feels the current light-middleweight division in Britain is wide open.

He said: "I'll talk with Frank and see where he's at. He's lost his biggest fighter, Amir Khan, which means he'll have to focus on younger fighters coming through and undercard fighters, so it could give me the chance to get back in the mix."

Paffett first to get a feel for Hamilton's McLaren

KENT'S Gary Paffett gave Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton's 2010 Formula One car its first shakedown run at an official test in Spain this week.

The McLaren Mercedes test driver from Bromley, travelled with the Woking-based team to Spain's Valencia circuit on Monday to begin preparations for the new Formula One season.

The 28-year-old driver, who was confirmed as McLaren's test driver for a sixth consecutive year last month, completed 86 laps in the car without any problems and posted the fifth fastest time of the day.

He finished nine tenths of a second behind returning seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher and 1.3 seconds behind pace setter, Ferrari's Felipe Massa.

Paffett was the first person to drive last year's McLaren, which was off the pace at this stage last season. After completing his stint he believes the team are in good shape at this early stage of the 2010 campaign.

He told Autosport: "We've got to be relatively happy with the day, we've got through it without any problems.

"The initial feel is good, but you never really know the speed, especially with the regulations this year with the fuel, you don't know what people could be running."

Reigning world champion Button and team-mate Hamilton, who are both graduates of Chatham's Buckmore Park Kart circuit, completed the remaining two days of the three-day test.

Pictures: GETTY IMAGES

BACK: Former Kent captain Mark Benson (left)

Benson retires as elite umpire for his health

FORMER Kent captain Mark Benson is set to return to the county game this summer after announcing his retirement as an international umpire.

The 51-year-old, who played 292 first-class matches for Kent in a 15-year career, stepped down as an elite umpire on health grounds.

Benson, who has umpired in 27 Test matches, 72 One-Day Internationals and 19 Twenty20 games, is out of contract in June but asked the International Cricket Council if that could be cut short to take up a place in county cricket.

He said: "The opportunity to be part of the global game has given me memories that I will always treasure. But travel and being away from home takes its toll on the family and some warning bells have started to ring regarding my health.

"Umpiring at the top level has been a very rewarding experience for me and it is not an easy decision to walk away from it, but I believe it is the right one as far as my health and family are concerned.

"So, having thought about it carefully, I feel now is the right time for me to step down and move to a more settled and familiar environment in England."

In December last year, Benson stood down before the second Test between Australia and West Indies because of ill health, but denied it was because he was unhappy with the umpire review system.

Benson joined the elite panel of umpires in 2006 and was shortlisted as ICC Umpire of the Year in 2007 and 2008.

County in quest to recruit stewards

KENT are looking for people to work as matchday stewards at the St Lawrence Ground during the 2010 cricket season.

Interested applicants must be physically fit and over 18.

Those successful will be fully trained and form part of the stewarding team at the club's home ground.

These positions are temporary and successful applicants will be required to work on match days only.

To apply, send an email with your name, full postal address and a copy of your CV to: safety.kent@ecb.co.uk or in the post to Kent County Cricket Club, St Lawrence Ground, Old Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3NZ.

Man vs machine

A chance to go up against Kent's newest recruit had KOS Media sports editor GLENN PEARSON in a spin

Picture: ADY KERRY, Warne picture: REX FEATURES

UNDER PRESSURE: I'm put through my paces by bowling machine Merlyn, which is capable of replicating Shane Warne's (left) leg-spin deliveries

MANY English batsmen far better than me have had sleepless nights at the prospect of facing Australian spin-king Shane Warne in his pomp.

His presence in the Australian side alone forced England to recruit the help of a bowling machine aptly named Merlyn to help them conquer their demons ahead of the 2005 Ashes.

Merlyn is an adaptation of a bowling machine that replicates Warne's leg-spin deliveries and is capable of mimicking his variations. Having seen the bowling machine work with some degree of success – although Warne went on to claim a staggering 40 wickets in that series – the England and Wales Cricket Board decided to stump up the money to send all 18 English counties a Merlyn machine ahead of the 2010 season.

Kent's arrived at the St Lawrence Ground in Canterbury just before Christmas and the players had their first hit against the 'wizard' last week.

Having been offered the chance to take on the county's newest signing (not to be confused with the club's new overseas leg-spinner Malinga Bandara) it was with a sense of trepidation that I donned the pads – not only because I was likely to be bamboozled by the array of spinning deliveries coming from Merlyn, but more disconcerting for yours truly, was that some of the Kent players decided to hang around to watch, or indeed get their own back.

Now, I'm not the worst batsman in the world, having been known to turn out for Rodmersham in the Kent League once or twice, but having the likes of Ashes winner Geraint Jones and Joe Denly – England's one-day opener – watching to see me fall flat on my face left me more nervous than the prospect of facing a fizzing Shane Warne leg-break.

After having been given instructions to how to prepare for a Merlyn delivery, which basically consists of waiting for a green light and then the pink ball shoots out two seconds later, I made the lonely walk to the other end of the wicket and took guard.

I'm not usually one for planning an innings, which may have something to do with never occupying the crease for long enough, but there was one thing frantically going around my head – don't get bowled.

That changed somewhat after receiving my first 10 fiercely spun off-breaks from Merlyn to – just hit the ball. Each delivery dipped and turned enough to beat each one of my defensive prods – something that eagle-eyed head coach Paul Farbrace was quick to spot. I'm pretty sure he gave me sound technical advice when shouting "you can use that lump of wood in your hand" but I could be mistaken, it's hard to hear underneath a batting helmet.

It was time for a new tactic to try and save face and that was to go all-out attack. Unfortunately that's not my strong point as my batting style is more Geoff Boycott than Kevin Pietersen. Having managed to surprisingly connect with a couple, including one pleasurable straight drive that almost decapitated our photographer Ady Kerry, I went for another dance down the track only to see the ball spin sharply past my bat and take the middle stump out. Cue cheers from the Kent players and staff.

After safely negotiating the remaining off-breaks, it was time to face some variations used by the off-spinner which included an arm-ball and a variety of deliveries that spun at different angles. Just like facing the top bowlers in world cricket, there's little or no hope of picking the subtle changes of pace or revolutions on the ball, especially for an amateur like myself, but for county cricketers it's fantastic practice during the off-season.

Next up was leg-spin which left me suitably red faced on more than one occasion. Playing what I thought was straight down the line of the delivery, the ball turned sharply past my outstretched bat on numerous occasions.

Merlyn is able to vary the amount of spin and pace put on each delivery ensuring no one ball faced is ever the same. The machine, which costs £11,000 and has been developed by its maker Bola and the ECB, is designed to give batsmen the chance to face spin bowling indoors, something a regular bowling machine is unable to provide and is made hard for county spinners on traditionally hard gym floors.

County coach Simon Willis said the equipment has gone down well with the players and will prove helpful during the months spent indoors.

"This machine has obviously had a lot of time spent on it to try and mirror the angles and degree of spin that top players produce on the ball at point of release," he said. "The software can give you off-spin, leg-spin and a variety of deliveries as well so it's a fantastic piece of kit and a great initiative."

And of my chances of getting a late call into the Kent squad this summer?

"It depends how many injuries we get along the way," Willis said diplomatically.

I think Joe Denly and Rob Key's positions as openers are quite safe for now.

To see this search 'Merlyn' @ yourkenttv.co.uk

Watch our video coverage of Kent's new Merlyn machine and its array of spinning deliveries

King's hopes and fears over return

Bad ankle injury could keep Gills defender out for rest of season

By DAVID PRITCHARD

SIMON King has cleared an important hurdle in his rehabilitation from a serious ankle injury, but it's still far from certain whether the defender will return for Gillingham this season.

The 26-year-old damaged ankle ligaments falling awkwardly in a pre-season friendly at Bromley last July.

It needed surgery to correct the problem and although King came off the crutches in October, he only got the go-ahead from specialists to begin jogging this week.

The centre-back's programme began with only a few minutes' light jogging on Thursday. After such a long time out, King admitted before the session he dreaded suffering a set-back.

Scared

"It's that nervous anxiety feeling where I've never been so scared but also I've been looking forward to this day for months," he said.

"It's mixed emotions – I think the only thing in my head is I don't want to get too disheartened if it is a bit painful, because obviously I haven't jogged for six or seven months."

King is on course with his recovery, but must still take his rehabilitation on a day-by-day basis. If Thursday went without a hitch he was expecting to be in again today, slowly increasing the time and intensity.

Although there are three months of the season still to play, there is no guarantee of recovering match fitness in time to make a first-team return. King has held on to the prospect of playing again before May to get him through the lonely weeks in the gym, but acknowledges it may not happen.

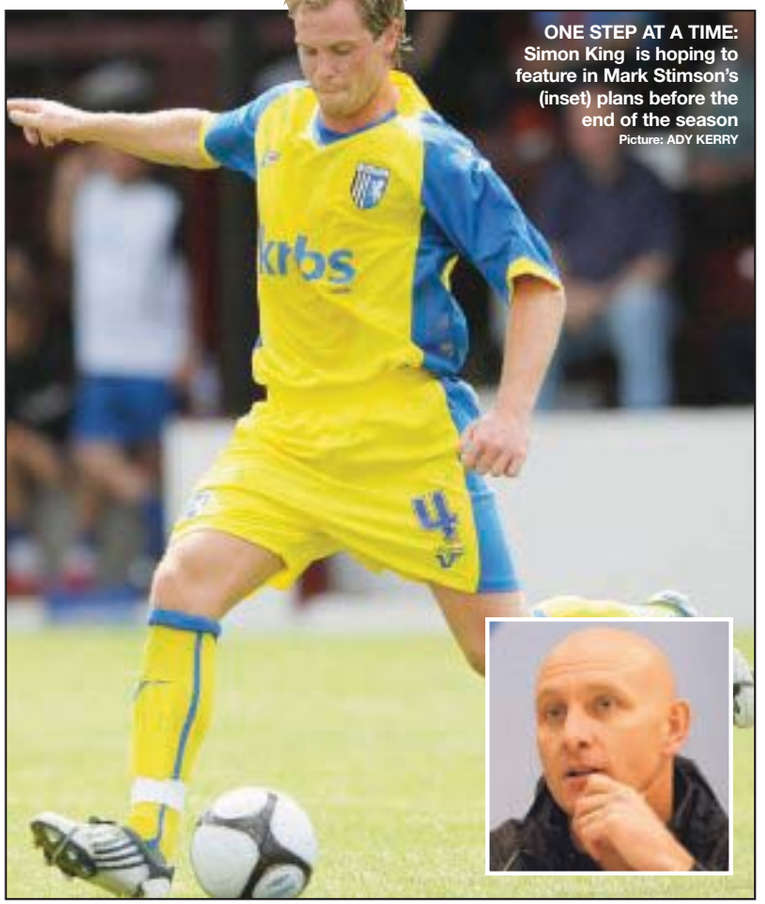
He said: "I think realistically a lot of people say I won't play again this season, but obviously I'm ambitious and I'd love to play some part.

"A couple of months from now we've got some tough games and if we're in a relegation battle – hopefully we're not – you never know, the gaffer might not want to put me in there.

"Ideally for me it would be nice if we had eased away from it and had nothing to play for, then he might stick me in and I'll get a few minutes."

Gills boss Mark Stimson has sorely missed King, who he rates as one of the best defenders in League One, but will make sure no short cuts are taken on the path to a full recovery.

He said: "We've got to make sure we keep the reins on him because Simon is one of these players who would play through anything."



ONE STEP AT A TIME: Simon King is hoping to feature in Mark Stimson's (inset) plans before the end of the season
Picture: ADY KERRY

NUMBER ONE : Kelly Holmes was denied gold by US drug cheat Regina Jacobs

Join online to help us win gold for Kelly

KOS Media, the publisher of this newspaper, has set up an online petition that we will take right to the top of world athletics as part of our campaign for Dame Kelly Holmes to receive the gold medal she was denied by a drugs cheat.

Holmes won a silver medal at the World Indoor Championships in 2003, finishing behind Regina Jacobs.

The American athlete tested positive for steroids weeks later, but the result still stands in the record books.

KOS Media will lobby world governing body the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) to strip Jacobs of her medal and officially recognise Holmes as the true champion.

First we need your backing, by joining our online petition. To sign up, visit www.epetitions.net and search 'KOS Media Campaign for Kelly', where you can leave a personalised message.

The campaign has received the support of Chris Hespe, head of Sport, Leisure and Olympics at Kent County Council.

He said: "It's vitally important for our young people in this county to understand cheats don't prosper. That's why I fully support the campaign.

"Kelly Holmes is such an icon now that if the wrong is righted then that will be of national, if not international significance.

"That's an incredibly powerful message that will reverberate around nations: if you cheat you will be found out, so it's not worth it."

Picture: BRITISH CYCLING

STEERING CLEAR? Jamie Staff (right) says he doesn't want to go to India

Olympic hero Staff latest star set to boycott Commonwealth Games

OLYMPIC champion Jamie Staff looks set to join a growing list of athletes who are planning not to compete at this year's Commonwealth Games.

The Games, which are scheduled to be held in Delhi, India, in October, have been surrounded by fears over security, which has put England's attendance at the championships in doubt.

Staff, who lives in Brabourne, near Ashford, is a big supporter of the Commonwealth Games and has featured in the last two at Manchester in 2002 and Sydney in 2006, winning two silver medals and a bronze.

But growing fears over security after terrorist attacks in Mumbai and Lahore in the last two years and concerns regarding the completion of venues, has left the 36-year-old contemplating pulling out of competing and said given the choice, he wouldn't make the trip to India this year.

He said: "I personally don't want to go and I'm not even sure if the track will be ready in time.

"There is a lot of speculation at the moment. It's a shame because the Commonwealth Games are normally a fun event, but no-one seems to be worrying about it this time round."

With a back injury likely to force him out of next month's World Track Cycling Championships in Poland, missing the Commonwealth Games would end Staff's hopes of a major medal this season.

Staff's comments echo the opinions of a number of athletes, who have stated their fears of travelling to compete in India. This week world heptathlon champion Jessica Ennis said she has pulled out of competing at the championships.

Fellow Olympian Lisa Dobriskey, from Ashford, has also hinted she may have to think about adding the Games to her schedule for this year.

IS EYE GOUGER STILL PLAYING FOR HIS CLUB?

Maidstone RFC refuse to say if player has been suspended

EXCLUSIVE

By **STEVE TERVET**

MAIDSTONE Rugby Club has refused to deny claims that it has allowed the player accused of blinding an opponent in an eye-gouging incident to continue turning out for the club.

Clarence Harding lost the sight in his right eye after he was allegedly the victim of a sickening eye-gouging incident while playing for Gravesend against Maidstone in a Kent Cup game on January 17.

Harding, 26, now faces the prospect of having his rugby career cut cruelly short, but he claims his assailant has played in two games since the incident and has not been suspended by his club.

Kent on Sunday has contacted Maidstone RFC for clarification as to whether the player has been suspended by the club, but all five senior figures we spoke to refused to confirm or deny whether the player has been suspended.

Suspension

Instead, all five pointed to a statement on the club website (see statement) which acknowledged the serious nature of Harding's injury but made no mention of a suspension for the player accused of gouging.

An RFU spokesman said: "No-one would have told them what to do. What they do is up to them.

"There is no common practice for this sort of situation – they are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Either the police will carry out their investigation first, or the RFU will, or the two will run concurrently."

Kent Police were still conducting interviews when KoS went to press, but had made no arrests and they confirmed the decision to suspend the player lay entirely in Maidstone's hands.

Both clubs play their rugby in London 1 South and the game was the second between the two this season.

Gravesend, who won the cup-tie 41-5, had already recorded a 58-7 league victory and they sit top of the table while Maidstone are second-bottom.

Gravesend chairman, Graham Haggar, believes the incident should be dealt with and a ban imposed.

He said: "Clarence is convinced his eye was deliberately gouged by a particular Maidstone player.

"Without wanting to pre-judge the result of an investigation into the incident, we regard eye-gouging as sly, cowardly and vicious as does the rest of the rugby fraternity.

"Any player found to have committed such an act should be banned from rugby for life and should face the full weight of the criminal law."

Harding, born in Cape Town and raised in Johannesburg, moved to the UK in October, 2000, and played a handful of games for Gravesend's 3rd XI before landing a job at TGI Friday's.

The demands of the job kept him away from the sport until he began working for the London-based corporate events committee responsible for building the X Factor set.

Now living in Gravesend, Harding returned to the club in November, 2009, and made his 1st XV debut in a 15-3 win at home to Tunbridge Wells on December 12.

Just three games later, though, his season was cut shockingly short and doubts remain as to whether the number eight will ever return to the rugby field.

He said: "At the moment I don't have a rugby career. This season has gone, there's no way I will play competitive rugby again this year.

"I've always been under the impression as a rugby player that if you're suspected of something like that on the field, you should be suspended indefinitely while the investigation takes place.

"He should be suspended for the time being but he's been selected to play in the last two games for them.

"Obviously they can't have taken it as seriously as we have."

The incident happened just two days after Stade Francais prop David Attoub was handed a 70-week ban for gouging Ulster's Stephen Ferris in a Heineken Cup game on December 12.

Picture: CHARLES HARDING

BLINDED: Clarence Harding (above playing for Gravesend), a keen guitarist, who is now blind in his right eye (below) after last month's gouging incident

Maidstone statement

"A GRAVESEND player was seriously injured in the Kent Cup game with Maidstone on Sunday 17th January.

"As a result, he is likely to lose the sight in one eye.

"Maidstone RFC, in its entirety, is cognisant of the seriousness of this injury and wishes to express its sympathy to the player concerned."

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